

PARIS
THROUGH AN ATTIC

A. HERBAGE EDWARDS

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Irene Gwen Andrews
October 1924

PARIS
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BY
A. HERBAGE EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF
"KAKEMONO, JAPANESE SKETCHES"

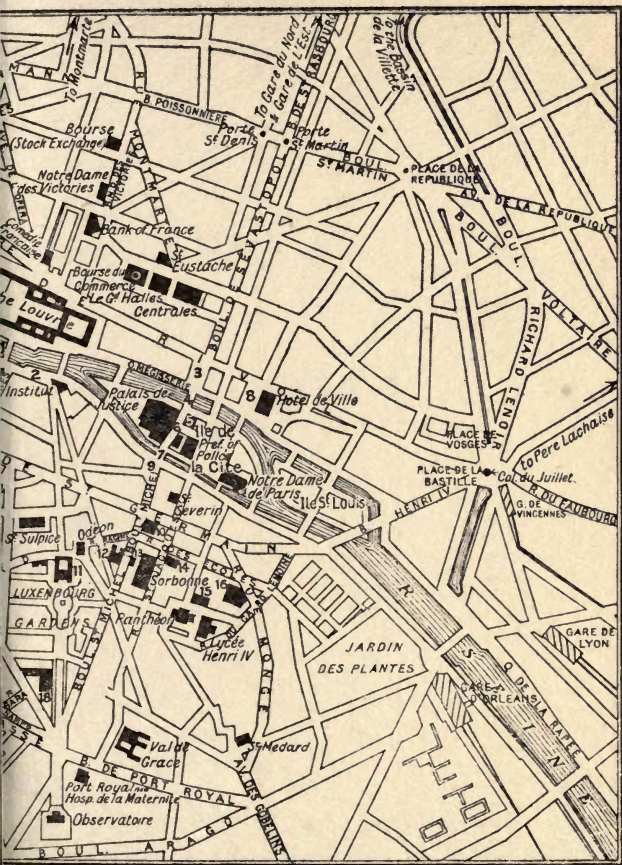


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TRAL PARIS.

PART I

THE MAKING OF THE CUBBYHOUSE

I

WE were rich in much real wealth—energy, health, love, even some knowledge—and we were not afraid. So we married.

A very simple money calculation which Richard did straightway in his head, but which I worked out carefully on paper to be quite sure, gave us a sum of £70 a year for two years, and gave it us free, with the world and time our own to make what we could of, our own to conquer the future with. So we married.

In the vain endeavour to mollify our few amazed relations we accepted bridesmaids, frockcoats, bouquets, and the Church Service. But for all that we began auspiciously I think.

As the bobbing verger shut us into the carriage, I turned to Richard and said firmly—

“Next time I’m married I shall go to the Registrar’s, that’s certain.”

“So shall I,” he answered, taking off his top hat as though he were removing handcuffs.

Then we looked at one another and laughed. And the chance maidens who always congregate in churchyards at weddings stared with all their eyes, shocked. I had broken the bridal tradition. Still I am always glad we laughed.

That night in old clothes, with third-class tickets, we crossed to Paris and our life began.

Immensely ignorant, wise perhaps where we least knew it, with the dancing thrill of Love and Youth within our hearts and bodies; with Time and the World our own for just two years, but with all the future beyond that to think for and to conquer; with one unalterable fact running like a refrain through all our planning—

“Seventy pounds a year, this year and next. Seventy pounds a year, this year and next.”

With this one fact and just this much money we faced two problems. How to live on £70 a year now, and how to live at all after.

And the real wealth that was ours, France helping, answered both.

II

High on a hill above the Seine stands a city of students, a city within a city, for Paris lies all around. Through seven centuries that city has stood looking down from its Parnassian Mount, looking across to Mont Martre; and the city at its feet has spread to encircle both. And still the hill of the Muses looks towards the Hill of the Martyrs, red often in the setting sun, and Paris surging with an ever growing life has encompassed both.

It was in the reign of a Saint, in an Age of Faith, that this city, growing up the hillside, built on its summit the college from which to-day it takes its name, while in an Age of Scepticism and irreligion (so says the Church), the Hill of the Martyrs has crowned herself with the white crown of the Sacré Cœur. For France truly Catholic has always cherished, and to herself has always reconciled, both.

Seven centuries have seen the city of the students standing here above the town, have seen it changing with the spirit of the passing years—giving Dogma and

Doctrine to a world in which all Art was theological and all Europe of one church and one creed; giving Dogma and Doctrine still to a world where Science is the only Theology and Europe has many churches and often no creed.

For seven centuries the city of the students has stood, fixing then the Laws of God and of His Church, and now of Nature and her children; consolidating the legal code of a church whose writ ran through Christendom, or of the Third Republic which has separated Church and State; speaking in Latin when the dead tongue of Rome was the medium of all knowledge and the second speech of man, teaching all the tongues that are and most of those that have been now that speech itself is a path to Science.

Founded in the reign of a Saint for the study of knowledge, when to the great intellects theology was knowledge; and, in truth, studying theology still though the strait and narrow way is broken down and all the earth and sky and the whole world which was and is, is knowledge now; for still in the larger sense knowledge must be theology, that is, the Science of God in all his manifestations through the study of that Trinity which is God, Nature, Man; and the study of that Unity which is Life.

A city of students set high on a hill. Paris has crowned her twin heights with a church and a school that that theology which alone is knowledge may be honoured in all its ways. Honoured and open and *free*.

And the Blessings of the Poor be on thee, O France, who puttest Learning above rubies and askest no price therefor, who feedest the hungry with the Bread of Knowledge and welcometh the Stranger within thy Gates.

Oh, great, indeed, is that Nation and clearsighted which so honours knowledge that she will give it freely to

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all who choose to come. Giving the living learning of her professors free as the air in her Cours Libres, and giving it with the dead learning of her libraries to the students inscribed on her register for a sum which, differing slightly with each faculty, is for Letters 24*s. od.*

Twenty-four shillings a year, can any other country match it? University training of the very best, and to the stranger as well as to her own children, in exchange for 24*s. od.* a year.

Thus does a great nation lay up treasure where alone treasure endures, in the hearts and in the minds of its people.

And St. Louis is justified of his descendants.

III

On the top of the Hill of Parnassus, between the Observatoire and the Western Railway station, is a narrow street, short and at so curious an angle that it looks like an illustration to the pages of Euclid. A mere hyphen of a street, broken at one end, it connects the broad quiet Boulevard Raspail with the broad busy Boulevard Montparnasse, and itself is lost between its own tall houses. It is a quiet street used mainly by its inhabitants, for whose convenience a few shops of eminent respectability occupy here and there the ground floors of its dozen houses; and its first, second, third, fourth, and fifth floor flats let at rentals of £50 a year and more.

The stone houses typical of Paris have wide doorways and polished staircases and always at least six stories. The second and fifth stories are surrounded with a stone balcony finished with a wrought-iron railing, and all the long, narrow, double windows, which open inward, have outside Venetian shutters, which shut back against the

wall every morning with a harmonious bang. The houses in fact have all the characteristics of those big stone buildings put up everywhere in Paris during the last twenty years.

As a consequence social cleavage in Paris is horizontal as well as lateral. Quarter says much, but story says a great deal. And a fixed line is drawn at the sixth story or rather at the one called the sixth (which may be even the seventh or eighth), for the sixth story in houses of this type is not divided up into the usual three sets of flats like those below, but consists of separate rooms nominally belonging to the flatholders and theoretically used as bedrooms by their servants, in reality frequently let to separate tenants; and also of a certain number of two-roomed flats. Therefore, though all the five stories below can visit one another on equal terms, the inhabitants of the sixth are outside the pale. They belong to another sphere as different as Hackney from Hampstead or the Commercial Road from Maida Vale. Polite society, though daily suffering maybe from the presence of a sixth above its head, ignores its existence, except to complain of its manners to the concierge downstairs. And even the friendliest of hostesses will wonder naïvely after the first shock is over, "What is it like up there?"

I always said in answer that there was a great deal of air. To which safe and truthful proposition every one could politely agree whatever they thought.

This construction of the Parisian house has some unexpected but important social effects. It mixes up the classes. The five stories may ignore the sixth, but the sixth is there, in the same house, using the same staircase, and the same entrance door, and consequently can never be allowed to fall very far below the standard of public manners set by the inhabitants of the superior five. While on the other hand it enables the more refined

among the poor to indulge a taste for quiet and decency, for beauty even, in the external surroundings of their homes which cleavage by locality as in England makes impossible.

For the sum of £13 a year we entered into possession of a sixth-floor flat in the corner house of this respectable street. It had two rooms and a cupboard called a kitchen. They were unbelievably small. To reach it you climbed 108 highly polished stairs, crossed five landings, and went down a long passage, and there in the left-hand corner of the right-hand passage stood our flat.

"Au sixième à droite, la dernière porte à gauche" (on the sixth to the right, the last door on the left). How familiar it grew! And across the years that have sped these words, the technical address of our flat, come back to me laden with a poetry that will never die.

"Au sixième à droite, la dernière porte à gauche." . . .

Our front door had a brass knob in the middle and a keyhole, and it was an ordinary single wooden door, not divided into two as the front doors of the superior stories below. There was no bell nor any knocker. Callers, if you had any, or tradesmen, if such arrived (the sixth mostly brought home its own goods for tradesmen became short in temper at the top of 108 stairs and required to be placated with tuppences), rapped with their knuckles. The coal kicked with its boots (strictly forbidden by the concierge) or bumped with its head. The bread deposited its long roll, like a four-foot walking stick, leaning against the handle so that it fell inwards on the mat when the door was opened. The milk left a glass bottle perched by its wire handle on the door-knob. And the scrape of the bread against the door, the bang of the milk bottle, served (inexpensively) as an alarm clock to wake us each morning. Neither bread nor milk was ever stolen although, on Sunday morning at least, they were not removed until many hours after their

arrival. Nor did I ever hear of other people losing theirs. The area thief seems lacking in Paris.

A fairly big substantial key opened this door from the outside, so if you were foolish enough to come out without it and the door banged behind you, there was no way of getting in again except by the aid of a locksmith. As a consequence hatless and breathless people followed by a man carrying immense bundles of keys are a fairly frequent spectacle in certain quarters of Paris. It is so easy "just to go and fetch some water" (water for the sixth is supplied through a common tap on the landing), or to empty your ash pan (flatholders empty their refuse into a common dustbin placed in the yard from six in the evening onward), or even "just to say good-bye" to a friend and walk to the top of the stairs, and then return to find the door, blown by the wind, shut inexorably in one's face. On the inside the doors had a lock which was drawn back like a trigger, and almost invariably they were painted a dark drab.

It was on a day in early October when we opened that door for the first time and an afternoon in August some two years later when we shut it for the last time, and no door was ever shut more sadly.

Our house was the corner house of the street and one side of it faced the Boulevard, and our flat was the corner of the corner, with one window of it actually set in the flattened angle of that corner and looking across the Boulevard down the long length of the street opposite, over the houses and the chimney-pots and the space of faintly moving green which was the Luxembourg gardens, over the whole width of the city, across to the Hill of the Martyrs, where flashing in the sunlight stood the white crown of the Sacré Cœur clear cut against an autumn sky.

"How beautiful, oh, how beautiful!" I cried, and we leaned on the wooden top of the iron balustrade which runs outside every French window and looked.

Paris lay beneath us, the masses of its houses and its roofs. We looked from south to north across the wide width of the city, and there on the extreme northern limit of the town, beneath the clear blue of an autumn sky, rose up the *Sacré Cœur*, immaculate in its new-born whiteness. The grey roofs stretched from us to it, a broken lake of colour. Above, the freshness and the peace of autumn was in sky and air. From beneath our feet rose up the city's hum. And the poetry of Paris, delicate and gay, penetrating as the scent of burning wood, and like it a little bitter to the senses, came in upon our hearts and minds, a living thing.

When we turned at last to look at one another each knew our quest was ended. Thirteen pounds a year, and this at our window!

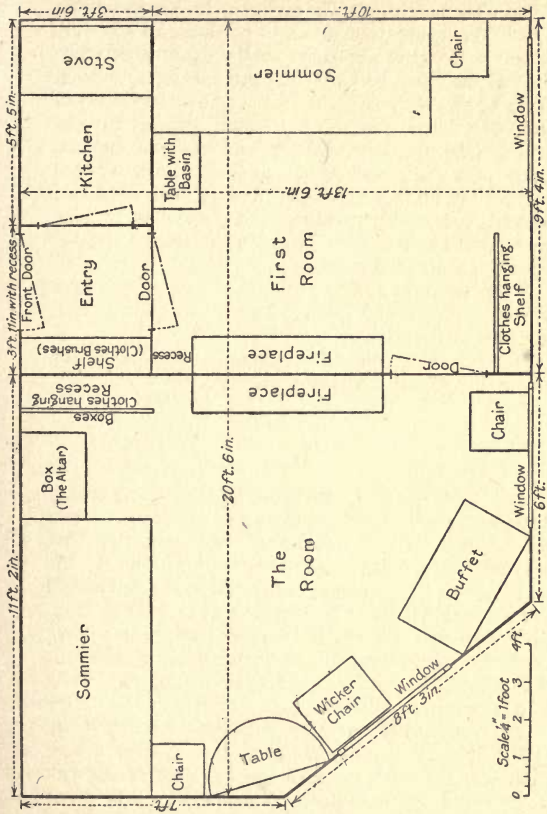
Moreover, the room which contained this window had five walls! Clearly our home was here.

IV

And that was how we found it, this unbelievably little flat, where we lived and reared and loved for two whole years. The "cubbyhouse" we called it. That was Richard's doing. He christened it; finding the word among the memories of his childhood when he had made "cubbyhouses" out of screens and sat in them with a solemn delight for hours and hours at a time. And the cubbyhouse it has remained ever since, for a space of 20 ft. 6 in. by 13 ft. 6 in. contained it all.

And this was how it was done.

First, there was an entry, which measured 3 ft. by 3 ft. 6 in., just enabling the front door to open in fact. And opposite the front door was the door of our first room. And here from door to window, which faced one another, stretched a space of 10 ft. On the right



A PLAN OF THE CUBBYHOUSE

was a foot-deep recess, the fireplace, and beyond it the door leading into the next room. The window wall measured 9 ft. 4 in. and was quite straight. The wall opposite the fireplace sloped imperceptibly for it measured 10 ft. 4 in. While the fourth wall of the room which contained the door measured, not counting the recess, 8 ft. 4 in. The window of this room looked down into the street.

Through the door in the fireplace wall one passed into the second apartment, the "big room" of our cubby-house. The one with the five walls and *the* window. The first wall on the left of the door and at right angles to it was 6 ft., and most of it was window, a window which looked into the street. The second was 8 ft. 3 in. and formed the flattened angle of the house, and a good deal of this was window too, *the* window. The third wall opposite the door was straight and there was just 7 ft. of it. The fourth wall on the right hand of the door and opposite the window measured nobly 11 ft. 2 in., but that included 2 ft. of recess. And the fifth and last wall, the one with the door, was made up of this recess and the fireplace (measuring together 9 ft. 6 in.), the door itself (2 ft. 11 in.), and the remainder of wall (13 in.), making a grand total of no less than 13 ft. 6 in.

These were the apartments of our flat. Now let us examine the "offices."

Behind the front door and between it and the first room, on the left-hand side coming in, and the right-hand side going out, and usually completely concealed by the open door of the first room (3 ft. 6 in.), was a doorway, the entrance to our kitchen. It had a stove at one end, the opposite end, which was the entire width of the room, and it measured 3 ft. 6 in. The space intended for the cook, between the stove and the doorway, was exactly 3 ft. 3 in. This kitchen had once owned a door of its own, but long before our time it had been

removed as entirely superfluous, which it certainly was, the door of the first room serving admirably for the two; for when the room door was opened, automatically the kitchen was shut, and when the room door was shut instantly the kitchen was open.

And lastly the height of our flat was 8 ft. 11 in., with the ceiling space less than the floor space, for all the outside walls sloped slightly inwards.

It was on the 9th of October, which is quarter day in Paris, that we took possession of our 20 ft. flat.

V

We had married, as I said, on hopes and two £70 a year, and our relations had been properly shocked at the idea. In spite of that, however, the traditional articles of silver plate turned up at the wedding just as though we were going away to live in the superior suburban villa which was socially our due.

"I shall make no distinction," my Uncle Thomas had said, "between you and your sister, whatever I may think. You will receive a silver biscuit-box of exactly the same value as hers in the hope, the *hope*, my dear, that you may have the necessary biscuits to put in it. But frankly I fail to see how."

So with predictions of speedy starvation we had had silver biscuit-boxes, silver butter-dishes, cake baskets, sugar bowls presented to us, and the fact amused no one but ourselves.

Cousin Harriet alone stood out a glorious exception. "I am at a loss to understand you," she said to Richard. "So at a loss to understand either your conduct or your . . . or your taste" (Cousin Harriet felt herself very delicate and tactful as she said this), "that I feel a

good wardrobe which was what I intended would be thrown away. Well polished and taken care of it would last a lifetime, and is suitable to any house, but I see no chance of your being able to provide that house, and as I have very little hope of the polishing I shall not do as I intended. Indeed, under the circumstances I could not think a wardrobe right. So I have decided to give you this," and she tapped an envelope, "instead. Do not spend the £10 recklessly. Buy something that will last."

I do not know why all our relations made speeches to us at this period, instead of talking like themselves. I can only suppose that disapproving so strongly they felt it necessary to "tell us quite plainly what they thought," and so set to work to think out very elaborately and unnaturally what they wanted to say. But they all did it. Cousin Harriet's opening, for instance, with its delicate allusion to me and my shortcomings, must have taken her quite a long time to compose. While Uncle Thomas, as Uncle Thomas, would have said—

"You girls'll get treated both alike, my dear, though you are playing the fool. Silver biscuit-boxes for the pair of you. Most show for the least money as I always say." And enjoyed the ancient joke.

But the difference showed how very far in their eyes we had fallen from grace and from the right way.

The silver plate was packed up and left behind us for the possible day when we should have food to put inside it and a sideboard to put it on, but what we should have done with Cousin Harriet's wardrobe, had it really been a wardrobe, I don't know. Blessings be upon her gloomy forebodings as to furniture polishing and a roof to house the wardrobe, for instead the wardrobe housed us.

With the £10 we furnished the cubbyhouse.

VI

"This," the concierge had told us as we stood in the first room, "is the *salle à manger*. Voici la *chambre à coucher*," and she opened the door into the five-sided room, the one with *the* window.

But, of course, we couldn't. To banish that vision of Paris with its white crown of the Sacré Cœur to a mere bedroom, and live in an ordinary four-walled room whose window looked down on the street, was not to be thought of. Hadn't we taken the flat especially for the window? Not though all the generations of tenants who had passed away before us had always done so, not even though the respective names of the two rooms were immutably fixed in every one else's vocabulary. The Pentagon was the *chambre à coucher*, and a bedroom it must remain, and did remain still in every one's speech through all the two years of our tenancy.

And there was reason for it. In the Pentagon alone was there space to sleep two people. And secondly to reach it was only possible through the traditional *salle à manger*. How could one then have the bedroom first and the parlour after? How could one? And get over the difficulty of where to put a bedstead too?

How could one?

It was almost as difficult a problem as our marriage had been, and after all we solved it in the same way. By ignoring tradition and going without.

We were walking down a street in the quarter where second-hand shops spread half their goods on the pavement when a spring mattress on four short legs, the French "*sommier*" in fact, reared against the front of one of them made me stop short. I saw it at once. Two of these, one in each room, against the wall in the

corner (a "sommier" has no head or foot), bed by night, and with a cover and cushions (the pillows in cases) sofa by day. The Pentagon and the window were saved. I almost danced on the pavement.

"Don't you see?" I said, shaking Richard by the arm, for he seemed to me to take a surprisingly long time to see it.

"Will you be able to sleep in it?" he said doubtfully.

"Of course. Why not? It's just the same as a bedstead only it hasn't a top or a bottom. No 'stead' you see, only the bed, and that's what you sleep on, isn't it? It goes up against the wall in a corner, and that will keep the pillow from falling. Oh, do get excited, it's just splendid. The window's saved."

"But," he said, "I don't quite understand. How will you keep the clothes on?"

"The ordinary way, of course, why not?"

"But they won't," he answered, pointing to the sommier standing up on its hind legs. "You can't. You'll be sleeping upright."

It was my turn to stare surprised and then to laugh.

"If you aren't the dearest old stup" (adapted form of stupid to suit Richard's idiosyncrasies) "in the world," I said. "You'll sleep lying down of course. It's got four legs, look," and I pointed to the front two which were scraping the wall of the shop, "and it will stand on them on the floor. Now do you see? It's only stood up to be out of the way."

He saw more or less, but, as he said, "How was one to know if people would stand things the wrong way up?"

So we entered the shop and bargained for "sommiers." While the man and I were engaged in prodding all the springs, he to demonstrate, I to discover, the perfection of their condition and the manifest superiority of these to any other second-hand "sommiers" of the quarter, Richard said meditatively, in that remote tone peculiar

to himself as though it were a matter of great, though of purely scientific interest—

“ I wonder who slept there last.”

I was brought up short, as I always am when he uses that tone of dispassionate meditation, just as short and just as breathless as though it were a large-sized bucket of cold water he had tipped over me. Instantly visions of cholera, of typhoid, or, less dangerous but more uncomfortable, of dirt and insects, rose out of the *sommiers* and swarmed upon me.

I looked again. Undoubtedly the ticking was dirty, but new *sommiers* would cost twice as much. We simply couldn't do that. Yet the visions of cholera and typhoid still hovered over the ticking. Then . . .

Then . . . Why then take off the ticking.

I turned to the man. He was quite willing, quite polite. Were not all these English mad?

“ Certainly if madame wished the *sommiers* could be delivered stripped of their covering.”

And I could wash the springs with carbolic, and I could, with three yards of sacking and a pennyworth of tin-tacks, cover them again as before. Well, if not quite so elegantly anyhow as efficiently. The cholera and the typhoid and the insects ceased to swarm upon the *sommiers*. The window was saved.

We got two *sommiers* for 24 frs. But the mattresses which went on the top of them, though the shopman charmed never so wisely, we got new. They cost us 31 frs., a heavy item.

					frs.
Two <i>sommiers</i>	.	.	.	.	24
Two mattresses	.	.	.	.	31
					—
					55

VII

We had moved in and I was engaged in re-covering the "sommiers" while Richard in the next room was skating over the floor with a podgy duster tied to each foot polishing it.

This was the last and most interesting stage of a process that became very familiar to us before we finished with it, and which began with my clearing the floor (unnecessary this time for there was nothing to clear) and Richard taking a substantial pad of "paille de fer," very thin iron shavings, and with this under first his right and then his left foot scraping the thinnest of top surfaces and all the stains off the floor. I swept up the sawdust that resulted, and followed in the track of the iron shavings on my hands and knees with a sort of thick vaseline out of a tin well rubbed into the boards. As a finish Richard skated over the whole with a podgy duster tied to each savate (felt slipper).

Polished floors and felt slippers are cause and effect here. For it is one of the unwritten laws of French life that no one walks continuously over polished floors in leather boots: first you spoil the floors and secondly you annoy the tenant underneath with the noise. So slippers for home wear, unless the flat is carpeted, which is expensive, are always "savates," that is, cloth slippers with felt soles.

Richard then was skating vigorously and the floor beneath his feet was growing the loveliest of golden browns, like a well-baked pie crust or the petals of a chrysanthemum. There is an artistic satisfaction in a well-polished floor which compensates for many things. Unfortunately it is often short lived, a drop of water, for instance, making a mark like candle grease. Luckily

our floor space was so limited that there was never above a few square inches where water could be spilt at all.

As floor polishing with its constant hip action is very injurious to women there has arisen in France a profession of floor polishers, all men, who come like window-cleaners in England and clean the "parquets" weekly. Our staircase was done every Friday by a little wiry old man who looked made of iron shavings himself. He had an elaborate array of brushes of all degrees of hardness and of pads too which fitted on to his shoes with thongs. He never went down on his hands and knees at all, but did it all from the thigh, and his trousers in consequence were two sizes larger than his coat and waistcoat in order to fit at the top at all, and had to be rolled up his legs at the bottom.

In time Richard took to floor polishing as a form of exercise, especially in the spring time, when his bowling arm always got an ache, so whenever he grew restless and walked up and down the room (three paces) bowling imaginary balls, I would take down the "paille de fer" and start him off on the floor.

I gave a last tap at an obstinate tack which would stick out, and Richard came skating through the doorway.

"Finished," he said, sitting down on a box (we hadn't any chairs yet), "and as hot work as ever I did in a scrum." He took out a handkerchief.

"You look warm," I said, "but you've done it splendidly."

He stretched out a pair of very long legs ending in swathes of duster. I sat down on the floor and laughed.

"What do you look like, gout or . . .?"

"Boxing," said Richard promptly, in that detached scientific voice of his, "with the gloves on my feet."

"French boxing, eh? Let me take them off," and I slid along the floor. "Safety-pins and knots, you're not the man to manage either."

"No," said Richard, "I'm clumsy, always was. I'm no good with my hands. I told you so." And the line I learnt to know so well came down between his eyes.

I knew perfectly well what he was thinking about.

"Lots of good with your feet, anyhow," I said and took off the last duster. "Look at the floor."

Richard studied it as an astronomer might a new star, and the line smoothed out. "Then you'll let me do floors? That's something."

I gave him a shake. "You'll be the complete housemaid before long, and I wonder how you will like that. Besides, I don't know anything about it either really, ask your Cousin Harriet. We're both going to learn. It's great fun. And this is going to be the very nicest kind of cubbyhouse that ever was made. . . . Come along, we've got to go down to the Bon Marché now, it's remnant day at the carpet and curtain counter, and some sort of curtains (don't forget the windows opposite) and some bits of carpet just to put our bare feet on in the morning we must have. And there are a few other things before we sleep to-night. Pillows. The family rose to sheets and dusters and things, but Cousin Harriet's wardrobe will have to supply the pillows."

"I think I should be cold with one sheet," said Richard slowly.

"You would, even with the rug on top. So come along and help buy a blanket."

"Can we buy blankets out of £10? There are all the other things."

There were. All of them, except exactly two sommiers and two mattresses.

"Blankets come first or you'd freeze. And no, I should not like you so much with a blue nose. What a comfort it is to me."

For Richard's nose was a most aristocratic feature, and its line a thing of sheer beauty, and I had so hungered

after a straight nose of my own all my life that the comfort was very real. Richard considered it a much over-rated feature and complained that it often got very cold. I believe he would have been capable of changing it for a warmer kind. Luckily for my peace of mind that was impossible.

We went down our 108 highly polished stairs gingerly, for we had not yet got our *parquet* legs. It requires art and habit to walk over polished boards without slipping and we were new to the work. But like swimming it's an art, once learnt, which is never really forgotten even after years of English floors. We walked down gingerly, then, but with an interest which no staircase had ever aroused before, and just because we ourselves had taken to polishing. This significance, this interestingness of ordinary things was one of the most charming revelations which our life in Paris was to bring to us. We were suddenly awakened as it were to the character of common things, so that nothing was common, but everything individual and interesting.

"We won't pretend," I said, as we at last turned into the street, "our floor isn't as good as that, but then I never knew how good that was before, did you?"

"Mind the tram," said Richard anxiously. We were crossing the Boulevard and it is always necessary to give all one's attention to French traffic, that errs on the side of being too individualistic.

"Now the rue de Rennes, the first turning on the left and straight on till you get there.

' 'Tis the voice of the guide book.
I heard it proclaim
Straight on and then turn
And straight on again.'

"That is not a very good rhyme," said Richard who had a fine ear.

"Good enough for the guide book. If Baedeker

dropped into verse it would be like that. Besides the rhyme isn't mine, it's Alice's, didn't you recognise it? I don't want the map any more." And I tucked it into Richard's coat pocket.

We turned out of the rue de Rennes and directly we left new Paris with its broad streets and smooth-paved roads for old Paris with its narrow streets and big cobble stones, where the lumbering brown 'buses, with their team of three white horses all abreast, seem to scrape the walls of the houses as they pass and do so scrape the kerbstones that the foot passengers have to flatten themselves against the shop fronts; and where the noise of the carts jolting over the stones is so deafening that conversation is impossible.

That was why, when we stood and watched a woman in the open doorway of a house frying chip potatoes in a copper cauldron full of clear boiling oil, I never got the pennyworth I coveted, for Richard didn't hear and I thought he didn't want to buy delicious, golden-brown, piping-hot potatoes. When we turned the corner it was like coming out of a tunnel into the open air, and I had realised that the potatoes, unless we ate them at once there in the street, would be cold before we got back. So I put it off to another day . . . and we have never eaten those fried potatoes yet.

We turned the corner and there stood the Bon Marché, imposing in its size and its squareness and the simplicity of its outlines, and rising very large and big out of its setting of small streets, but with a lightness and a fineness quite French in the proportions of window to building, and in the row of outside counters under a glass awning.

The Bon Marché is not only a shop on the left bank of the Seine, it is an institution. Besides providing a standard by which the inhabitants can reckon up the merits and demerits of other shops, and giving always a

certain value for money received in its ordinary sales, it offers often weekly opportunities to the hard-up of getting good things at lower prices by a system of selling off its remnants and old stock "occasion" at regular intervals. These sales are genuine and frequent. The carpet and curtain department, "tapisserie" for floors and walls, which has an enormous turnover, has a sale once a week, and these remnants were all gathered together on two or three of the outside counters at one end of the shop. Since then the "tapisserie" has found a whole shop of its own on the other side of the parent building and these counters know it no more.

We formed part of a good-sized intently business-like crowd, nearly all women of the middle and lower middle classes, many without hats but with the exquisitely well-dressed hair of the Parisian woman, hair which is never just pinned up, but is carefully done and looks it. We were all politely intent on bargains, for quite obviously pence meant a good deal to us. A very large housewife in front of me, whose day's marketing included several pounds of spinach that was bulging out through the meshes of her string bag, was in search of two pieces of carpet "pareil" (to match) at "cent sous." She had the five-franc piece in her hand, and that was obviously her limit.

Most French women have a very definite idea of a market price and also of the price above which they themselves have no intention of going. My large lady taught me a great deal during the half hour I was wedged in beside her, turning over bits of carpet in her company. And it was one of her rejected fragments, a "tapis d'Avignon" made of felt which she explained wouldn't wear much above ten years, which I subsequently bought. I know she thought me short-sighted, but the colouring was so good and the carpet was nearly three feet square (she would have had to cut it in two)

and would lend such an air to the Pentagon, which, after the furniture was in, it nearly covered, that I bought it. It distressed her to find me so improvident and I know she pitied Richard deeply.

"C'est belle la jeunesse," she said commiseratingly to him, "mais ça ne pense pas."

But the young man of the carpet counter took my part. He had a "tapis d'Avignon chez lui." His wife, "une très bonne ménagère," was much enamoured of it. He knew the "fabrique" where they were made and he considered their merits ignored and the opinion against them pure prejudice. And he said so at great length and with great eloquence too in a flow of well-chosen sentences. The large lady with the spinach coming out through the meshes of her string bag listened and replied also at length, with a long list of reasons to support her prejudice anyway, reasons which evoked expressions of approval from some of the other housewives, and everybody was so delighted to express their opinions that for awhile buying was suspended and we all joined in an animated discussion on carpets. We all talked at once, but we all listened to what the others were saying at the same time, a French gift shared indifferently by all grades of society. And the voice of my large friend gesticulating with the hand which held the five-franc piece dominated the debate, while the shriller voice of the little "commis" would hop up as it were for a moment above the rest with a "mais, mesdames," as he started off on another fluent period.

The whole thing was ended with startling abruptness by the large lady whose eyes had been busy though her tongue was occupied. She pounced suddenly on two pieces of Brussels carpet with an abrupt, "Voilà mon affaire," which brought the little "commis" back to the business of selling again and everybody else to that of buying.

I clung to my "tapis d'Avignon." It had a bold design of green branches on a terracotta ground in subdued tapestry shades that appealed to me. The "commis," who in the course of the discussion had come to regard me as a friend and ally, dived into a pile of curtain lengths on the other side of him, and pulled out yards of a canvas material stamped with fleurs de lis in peacock blue.

"If madame wishes curtains," he said, "she should take this. C'est une vraie occasion. Et joli, n'est-ce pas?"

It was, in both colour and design, and besides double width at 5*d.* a yard. The very stuff for our windows. But was there enough? So the little commis, who felt our tastes in common, ran rapidly through all the piles of stuff under his control to find sufficient remnants for me. Meanwhile I hugged what he had found already fast within my arms.

"Three, four, metres. Ah, voilà encore un morceau," he was talking hard all the time. I was doing figures in my head badly, and endeavouring to translate yards into metres at the same time. Richard, to whom this task usually fell, was too far away to be of use.

The commis turned out five pieces of stuff of various lengths. "Two pairs and a half," I said at last, "but there are three windows, monsieur."

He took another dive through all the counters and shook his head. "C'est tout," he said, "absolument," and he made the word as long as an eighteenth-century epitaph.

I felt more mournful still. The Pentagon was safe, but the third window. What were we to do? Then a light broke suddenly.

"I have red," he said, "la même chose exactement, not so pretty, mais encore, . . ." and he shrugged his shoulders. And then added significantly, "Toujours le

même prix, c'est quelque chose" (always the same price, that's something).

It was. It was even a great deal. And though the canvas stuff with its red fleur de lis was not so decorative in my eyes as the peacock blue, it was still good, and still 5*d*. I took it.

As the commis gathered my remnants together over his arm approvingly, he drew himself up.

"A very good bargain," he said, speaking to me but addressing the crowd. "Madame will be pleased. Elle a de quoi. C'est moi qui vous le dis."

And so my reputation as a housewife was amply vindicated.

	frs.	c.
1 carpet	6	90
10 metres 70 curtain material	5	35
7 " 60 " "	3	80
2 coverlets (sort of eiderdowns made of cotton wool wadded, very warm, instead of blankets).	19	50
muslin for short curtains at two windows	3	50
2 pillows, square, used for cushions, bolsters, and pillows	6	00
4 "	5	00
2 pillow slips	2	80
	52	85

VIII

The place St. Sulpice is a sudden square of quiet reached through the noise of cobbled streets. A spacious square, where Visconti's fountain splashes in the sun and the flower women stack their wares along the edge of the pavement. A quiet square still ecclesiastic in spite of the Mairie of the VIth arrondissement which faces the church, for on one side is the long high wall of the seminary (now a museum) and on the other the shops of the rue St. Sulpice, all filled with church furni-

ture, church books, church vestments. The place St. Sulpice is still in fact what so many Paris squares were once, the "parvis" or "space before" the church of St. Sulpice. And the shops which display their sanguinary plaster statues or their insipid, simpering Madonnas are at least in harmony with the religious character of the square, and provide a moral for the contemplative.

In the most secluded corner of the square, on the church side of the seminary, and just beyond the corner of the narrow street which leads steeply up to the Luxembourg, stands a tiny second-hand shop, different from other second-hand shops, but in keeping with its own surroundings, for it sells only second-hand church possessions. Rosaries, crucifixes, mass books, fill its one small window, and round its open doorway stand holy-water stoops and confessionals. In front and on the actual pavement of the narrow street were three rush-bottomed church chairs, tied by a string through their legs to the folded-back shutters of the window. These chairs were of some dark well-polished wood and their backs were in three ever broadening bands, wide, wider, widest. One limped unmistakably in its left hind leg, but the other two were quite sound.

Now the cubbyhouse had to have chairs, at least two chairs to sit up to dinner on, and the cheapest wooden chairs of deal, the modern church and concert chair, cost 3 frs. 25 c. each, and they were not beautiful. Yet nothing as cheap as these had been found in any second-hand shop so far, chairs always seem to fetch their price.

We were discussing the point when we crossed the square and happened on this odd little shop. Richard was urging chairs at once instead of the present discomfort. I was for the right chairs if possible and putting up with the discomfort, when we turned the corner of the square and found them, there against the wall in front of us.

A little man, who must surely have spent his youth as an acolyte and his manhood as a verger, appeared above the holy-water stoop as we turned to enter the shop.

"Yes, they were chairs, certainly, church chairs." And he looked at us in surprise. "Madame desires them for . . ."

"No, madame desired them simply as chairs to sit on, and they seemed quite suited to that purpose. Except the one which limped, but then she only desired two."

"Ah, two. That was impossible. The three went together or not at all. A specially low price had been made in consequence. Seven francs, it was a gift."

Twice 3 frs. 25 is 6 frs. 50, and here for 5*d.* extra was another chair limping on its left hind leg, but still another chair. And above all chairs we liked, chairs which would save the cubbyhouse from looking like an omnibus waiting room. Surely it was worth it. I looked at Richard. He was sitting comfortably in a sound chair and saying it felt solid and the back was quite firm. That seemed somehow to decide the question, though I am not sure even now whether it had or had not any real bearing on the ethics of spending an extra 5*d.*

Anyway we spent it. And got back its full value at once in an interesting discussion on the tenets of Protestantism, the ex-verger assuming that, of course, being English we were Protestants. But his own attitude was so instructive. Brought up in the shadow of a church and a seminary, engaged for years in a commerce of church possessions, with an intimate knowledge of masses and ceremonies, rosaries, confessionals, vestments, he had come to regard the whole of Catholicism as a question of price. He spoke as a Drury Lane producer might speak, of a "*très belle messe de mariage*" with 600 candles, all blessed, which cost so many thousand

francs. And he regarded Protestantism as a kind of blackleg creed which undercut the legitimate business by purveying salvation at cheap prices. In his view its tenets had been compiled solely with this object. And when we suggested that anyway that was good for the poor, he broke forth into a flood of denunciation, for he joined to his commercial Catholicism a very red Republicanism, and the idea of "squeezing" the rich with blessed candles at double prices rejoiced his revolutionary soul.

It was a most curious combination and cut across all my preconceived theories . . . and, on reflection, a wonderful example of the adaptability of the Roman Catholic Church. The way he hurled "*l'aristocratie*" and "*la ploutocratie*" with long rolled "r's" at our heads was quite alarming. All millionaires were Protestants, he affirmed, "*et pour cause.*" That was why they abounded in England and America, and why France and Italy had fewer, and Spain none at all.

Scotched and killed apparently by a multitude of blessed candles at double cost that never more might they encumber the earth.

He recovered himself at the end of his harangue without the least difficulty, and returned to business by booking our address and saying the chairs should be delivered by his little boy "*après la messe.*"

And we were left to make our way home up the steep little street through the Luxembourg Gardens, the noisy cobbled rue Bréa, and the bit of the Vavin that continues it to our boulevard.

How familiar those streets grew! Because down them, through the Luxembourg, and out to the Boul' Miche (student slang for boulevard St. Michel) was our way to the Sorbonne. We learnt to know every shop, every window, everything in every window. The day the fowls, spitted on a long wooden stick, would be roasted in front

of a wood fire burning on the floor in the open shop of the man who sold ducks, geese, and chickens, and roasted joints for his customers. The nondescript newspaper and fancy shop kept by a little married woman "très comme il faut," who nursed her baby on the threshold and exhibited in the window among some wit the rankly indecent pictures of the lower French comic papers, side by side with match-boxes in the form of a little "cabinet" where the matches filled the pan, quite complete down to the twig broom hanging on the wall. For the whole of two years specimens of this curious taste in match-boxes stood in the window and supplied us with much food for thought on this surprising corner of French taste and character.

And at the corner where the Vavin crosses the long rue Notre Dame des Champs was a large confectioner's displaying in its window, beautifully set out, little piles of the most delicious kinds of chocolates and marrons glacés and other French sweets. "Bonnes Bouches 1d. each," said the little ticket stuck into the dish, and I used to look and long.

I am, it's perhaps truer to say I was, very fond of sweets, but in the budget of an income of £70 sweets can find no place. And so Richard and I, particularly when I was very sweet hungry, would stand in front of the window and lengthily choose ten "Bonnes Bouches" with very much care and consultation, against the time we could afford a whole franc's worth. I always promised myself a whole franc's worth all at once as a kind of sublimely satisfying treat. I never got them. Sometimes when we had chosen our ten Bonnes Bouches, peering into the window at the sight of something particularly luscious on a dish in the corner, Richard would look at me pleadingly, but I resisted temptation, consoling him and myself by the reflection that anyhow it was lucky we hadn't got them last time as these were so much

nicer, and so perhaps "next time when we really might they'll be nicer still." And so we would go away, back to our cubbyhouse again. And sometimes . . . sometimes I even dreamt about those sweets.

How clearly I can see them still! Set out in their neat piles on their many-shaped glass dishes, the blue velvet drapery beneath in its exact folds; the brown shield-shaped ticket on its long spike with the "Bonnes Bouches 10 c." in white lettering with a long flourish underneath. I dreamt about them, but I never ate them. And yet for an unspent franc few people could have had so many sweets.

Curiously enough they have spoilt the flavour of all subsequent sweets for me, for none have ever tasted so good as the Bonnes Bouches I didn't eat.

IX

We had bought a table, round, with flaps which shut down (7 frs.), a little buffet with a drawer and cupboards beneath in its raw state of plain deal, which I stained (6 frs.). We had got a dinner service in Brittany ware consisting of two soup plates, bowls (6*d.*), where a wonderful house with red windows stood between tall Noah's-ark trees; three dinner plates with a Brittany peasant in a huge felt hat and baggy blue knickers pursuing a lady in a coif with a flower in her hand (7½*d.*); smaller editions of the same for pudding; and cheese plates with variety in the colour of the costumes (four at 2*d.* each); three plates of a much better quality in blue with a "fleur de lis" pattern (a great extravagance) for bread and butter plates, dishes, etc., 6½*d.* each. A tea service in the same ware of cups (bowls) with flat solid handles at each side like ears, adorned with yellow

cocks (three at 3½d. each); for saucers small plates with slightly different peasants. A breakfast service of two larger sized cups on the same saucers (4d. each), one bowl served as a sugar basin at tea time. A small jug for milk 6d. For dishes three brown earthenware ones, fireproof, in which I cooked as well and so saved dishing up.

We had bought four broad shelves and put them up along the walls of the two rooms to hold our books, and narrow shelves put up above the mantelpiece in the Pentagon as a dresser to hold the china.

We had made a wardrobe with a curtain hung from a wide shelf, fixed in the first room on the wall by the window, using the top of the shelf for hats and the underneath part to hang our clothes. We had turned two wooden cases (placed in the recesses) into a pantry and a store cupboard. We had curtained the windows and carpeted one floor.

We had, after much consultation, bought a tiny French cooking stove, almost like a doll's one in size, but perfectly workable, which saved much coal and gave out a good deal of heat, which boiled and fried on the top, and baked in the oven, got all our lunches, and heated up our dinners, and served for all purposes except my great cooks twice a week on market days. Its only drawback was that being so small it required stoking every half hour, and if left alone went out promptly in about forty minutes.

We had even bought an elegant green china jug with an arched handle and a quaint spout to stand in a large yellow earthenware bowl for a toilet set, but the wash-stand itself was lacking. The top of the wicker dress basket which we were using was not a good substitute, especially as with our limited space we had to keep all clothes not actually in use in it, and the water splashing over went through. So we came to the momentous

conclusion that we must buy another table, a plain deal table just large enough to hold our yellow washbasin, and just large enough (this was important) to stand in the space left between the "sommier" in the first room and the door. That meant a very small table indeed. The smallest size made by even a French carpenter. They were selling them down the street for 3 frs. 35 c. I had a feeling they ought to be less, and we were getting so near the end of Cousin Harriet's wardrobe and still there were many necessary things, kitchen things, table things, all the things one never thinks of and always wants (besides such things as more saucepans and more lamps), that we had to be very, very careful. But still that washstand table had to be bought. The wicker dress basket was not only uncomfortable, it was extravagant. We couldn't afford to spoil our clothes, because we had no place for more in a budget of £70. So we came to the conclusion the table must be bought. And bought it was, but not for 3 frs. 35 c. We saved the 3½d., and this is how we did it.

One day we had wandered a long way from the Montparnasse, right away down the steep hill behind the Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève, past the avenue des Gobelins, a good hour's walk from the cubbyhouse, when we found a shop with tables, nothing but deal tables of all sizes, from large kitchen ones down to the tiniest of small tables, down to our sized table. And these were marked quite plainly 3 frs. each. There were piles of them too. Three francs! And exactly like the others at 3 frs. 35 c.

I looked at Richard. Of course the man would never send one table all that way across Paris for nothing. People didn't even like coming up the 108 stairs without being tipped for it. Yet here was the table.

Now you can't wrap a table up. Nor can you carry it

as though it were something else. An eighteen-inch deal table is no weight, but the legs are awkward.

We stood and looked at them.

"If you took it under your arm," I said, "and . . . and walked inside the legs, they wouldn't stick out *much*."

Richard considered. The idea did not appeal to him. He doubted whether the legs were wide enough apart to contain him, and he still had notions of "manly dignity," and a strong objection to being stared at. But I had got down to the depths where $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ has more reality than all the staring in the world. Besides a spirit within me always says on such occasions, "Why not, if you want to?"

I thought of the dress basket and our slowly spoiling clothes, of Cousin Harriet's vanishing wardrobe, and the weight of the saucepans, lamps, spoons, forks, still to get. I looked at the table.

"Richard," I said desperately, "I know what. You go on and let me carry it. It isn't heavy and I don't mind the staring, at least not as much as you do."

But Richard wouldn't.

If the table had to be carried an hour's walk across Paris, he must do it naturally. But . . .

It was his "but" which made me hesitate. I felt very strongly the $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ should be saved, ought to be saved. Why it would buy a whole new saucepan all by itself, or help the kitchen lamp which I wanted so badly. Yes, it had to be saved. But . . . and I hesitated.

Sheltered within a grove of tables we talked the matter out.

I couldn't squander $3\frac{1}{2}d.$

Richard would have to carry it.

Two fixed points, but how to reconcile them, for all his manly dignity stood between.

It was the day itself which came to our aid. A dim

drab day, whose dead light, holding neither shade nor colour, held no life. A grey sky, cloudless because all cloud, had stretched above the housetops since the dawning, and now was darkening fast. The chill wind which blew like an ice-tipped arrow down the streets and kept the rain from falling, the fight of east with west, was veering round. The cloudless sky was thickening as it lost its light, and straying drops of rain pattered on the pavement between the blowing arrows of the wind. Suddenly a window in a house across the street shone out with a yellow light, and the bending figure of a woman machining came a momentary silhouette before both went out behind the closing shutters. For a while the bands of light and shade, the shadow of the shutter, made a ladder on a neighbouring wall. Then below the lamps were lit, and in the white glow of the electric lamps shadow and light went out. Night came, and day was done.

It was the sudden shining of the yellow light across the street that solved the problem. Wait, wait just that little while which would turn the day to night, and then carry the table. It would halve the staring. Richard would preserve his manly dignity more easily. I told him eagerly, within the grove of tables, my hand on his arm, and there was still light enough for me to see the relief, and the smile at that relief within his eyes as I spoke.

So we walked down the street and back again. Still the day lingered, and the ladder of the shadow of the shutter was faint upon the wall. Gradually the bands of light crept out distinct between, and slowly the bands of shadow blackened. Other lamps were lit in other rooms. The long perspective of the street grew shorter. A shop here and there threw a broad square of light upon the pavement. Then while yet the day seemed merely grey and dark the white globes of the street lamps swelled out into light, and it was night at once.

We went back to the shop and bought the table from a school girl who expressed no surprise or interest at our walking off with it. This was a great gain, and a most propitious sending off, making the carrying of tables through the streets of Paris an ordinary event of every-day life.

So we started. Richard had the table top clutched firmly under his arm, and the four legs back and front of him. Two people turned their heads and stared as we passed under a street lamp. And a group of children sprung from nowhere watched us change the table from one arm to the other at our first halt.

To walk inside the four legs was, even for a thin man, a tight fit, too tight to be endured for long at a stretch, and Richard for a respite was carrying the table with the top pressed against his chest and the four legs as an advanced guard in front of him, when a hurrying man ran into him as we turned a corner. He looked surprised as he recognised the cause of the collision. I did the apologising and he ended by being quite amiable. He even wished us "Bon voyage" as we parted.

After that I walked inside the ends of the legs while Richard held the table, and, brilliant thought, held up an umbrella. It concealed quite a good deal of the legs and prevented collisions, but was only possible in the broad streets as we had to walk abreast. It was anxious work too, to keep just fitted in, and I realised what it was like literally to be a round peg in a square hole.

At last we came upon a few moments of pure peace when we turned into the steep street that leads up behind the Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève. There was no one here, not a passer-by, not a cart, very few lamps even, and deep doorways in which we were quite hidden, table and all. So we put down the table and rested, speaking little, and that constrainedly. And then the wind died down and the rain began in earnest.

Richard carried the table up this street on his shoulder, the legs sticking out above his head. It was when we had reached the large dark mass of the Bibliothèque and he had halted again to change the table that I hurriedly thought. The Luxembourg Gardens would be shut, we should have to go round. Which way was best? Either meant a piece of the "Boul' Miche" with its shops, its cafés, its students, and its other frequenters. So we stopped again to think. Right hand or left? The left was longer, but we avoided the Odéon corner and the busy Bréa and Vavin.

So with the table under his left arm and the legs grasped firmly in his right, Richard started off again. I was not tall enough to cover him comfortably with my umbrella, he could not use his own, and the ache in my arm with the effort of holding a large umbrella high up over his head was exhausting. There was one comfort. We were getting wet, but every one else was so hidden under his umbrella and so occupied in getting quickly out of the rain that there was no time to spare. So we passed down the Boul' Miche without adventure, and one never knows what may excite the interest or the ridicule of its inhabitants.

The street behind the Luxembourg was deserted, so was the rue Bara, and the little street by which we gained our boulevard. Before we left its shelter we halted again. The rain had stopped and the boulevard was full of life and light. Right and left the trams ran, streaks of yellow light, the clang of their bell incessant. Beneath the bare trees the asphalted path was full of passers-by, loitering along taking their pleasure here in a stroll beneath the bare wet trees on a cold, dreary autumn evening, with that disregard for weather, that passion to be out and not in, and to take their pleasure publicly in the streets which makes of Paris a city whose customs are so much more southern than its climate.

We took a final look at one another, both of us very near the end of our tether, before we plunged into the throng upon the boulevard. And we went quickly. A little way along, across, still along, and then sharp to the left, into our street, our doorway, our staircase, our landing, and, at last, our flat.

We had brought the table safely back. We had saved the 3½*d.* But somehow neither Richard nor I ever referred to that walk across Paris for quite a long while. It lay in our consciences a strange piece of matter which we had first to assimilate. Now it is one of our most cherished possessions.

X

Between the Luxembourg and the Montparnasse lives a colony of artists, largely foreign, mostly women, who come to work more or less seriously in one of the big teaching studios near the Luxembourg. Montparnasse is so much more respectable than Montmartre. For the Martyrs have fallen into low company lately on their hill across the river, while the Muses, well off and comfortable, sit sunning themselves on their southern slope. So the studios of Montparnasse are patronised largely by foreigners and women, and those who like their art flavoured with respectability. It gives a character to the quarter, and it finished furnishing the cubbyhouse. That was important.

We had spent on curtains, carpets, beds, etc., £4 14*s.* 3½*d.*; on tables, chairs, buffet, stove, china, and other things £4 4*s.* 1*d.* We had £1 1*s.* 7½*d.* left for all the rest of the furnishing. It was then the foreign student came unexpectedly to our aid. For the English or American art student (of all ages up to sixty or more)

comes to Montparnasse, takes a studio or a flat with an enlarged window, furnishes it, lives there, works seriously or otherwise, for any length of time from three months onward, gives up the flat, sells the furniture, and departs. Studios are frequently handed over entire, and their belongings will descend to as many generations of owners as those of college rooms. But art students who live in flats generally have to sell theirs separately as best they can. It was through one of these that Cousin Harriet's wardrobe completed the flat.

I had heard in the milk shop below that "un Anglais" in a flat round the corner was selling his belongings. (We are all English abroad, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, English, colonial, or Americans, a lumping together which apparently pleases no one of us.) So we went to the flat round the corner and found four Americans. One was the owner, another his friend, and the remaining two were people they knew from the same studio, just arrived, just married, and just setting up for themselves in a flat. To us a very swagger flat in one of the most expensive houses of the quarter, but which they regarded much as we did our cubbyhouse—as a daring experiment in poverty. An attitude which left me bewildered to think they could think so, and inwardly argumentative that it wasn't so. I had yet to learn that most things are relative in this world.

The new young wife, almost as new as I was, was very tall and very fair, and she was going to study art. The new young husband was also very tall but very dark, and he was going to study medicine. They both talked with expansiveness and invited us cordially to the wonderful flat, which we quickly learned was to be supported, themselves included, on about £500 a year or so by wealthy parents in the States.

"But," they said, "there's nothing left for you here, we have bought it all."

I looked at the owner of the property surprised (we had already admired their possessions), and he smiled.

"I guess there's still some," he said in a soft, slow drawl which seemed to conceal a good deal of amusement.

And when they were gone he brought out the "some."

All the odds and ends of furnishing, from teaspoons and ashpans to lamps and a square of carpet matting at 3 frs., to us a most valuable collection.

We spent nearly two hours trading. When we were through and our heterogeneous collection of purchases piled together at one end of his studio, I looked up.

"I thought she said there was nothing left," I said.

"That is so," he answered.

"But . . ." and I pointed to the pile, besides a quantity still left to him. "But there was all this."

He looked at it, too, and then at me, at both of us.

"Dollars ain't exactly the best kind of glass for spectacles," he said.

"But I thought," I began surprised, "in America . . ."

He nodded. "Just so. It's the mistake my country's making. But we'll pull through, we're young."

It was the first time I had ever come into actual contact with that buoyant note of confidence, moreover in one who didn't flap the eagle at you. . . .

"Do we all seem so very old then in Europe?" I asked.

"Old enough," he said, "to be the greatest tempters to us."

"You find Paris fascinating?" asked Richard.

He turned round. "I do so, sir," he said and stopped.

"Good Americans when they die go to Paris," I quoted lightly.

He smiled sombrely.

"The good," he said, and stopped again.

The smile died out of his eyes. Then suddenly with tremendous energy—

"But the rest, sir, the rest, Paris sends right down to hell."

"Right down to hell." The words haunted me. "The rest Paris sends right down to hell."

Paris, so beautiful, whose delicate charm had laid such a hold upon my heart. "Right down to hell."

Was it true? And if true should we be among the rest?

If it were true we always might be. But was it true? And what exactly did he mean?

For the charm of Paris was to me the charm of cheerful living, of gaiety and laughter. The charm of quick thinking and delicate emotions. The charm of a courage which makes fun of its own tears, and which with wit and work goes right through the tragic to the eternal comedy of life. A charm of subtlety and smiles, with its aesthetic appeal to that beauty which is delicacy and grace. A light-hearted charm which makes pleasant all it touches, duty, work, and sin.

And sin!

"The rest, sir, Paris sends right down to hell."

Did he mean by that charm which can make so pleasant and so pleasing all it touches . . . even sin?

THE FURNISHING OF CUBBYHOUSE ACCOUNT

	fr. c.
2 sommiers	24 ⁰⁰
2 mattresses	31 ⁰⁰
1 carpet	6 ⁹⁰
Tapisserie (10 ⁷⁰ metres)	5 ³⁵
" (7 ⁶⁰ ")	3 ⁸⁰
2 cotton-wool coverlets	19 ⁵⁰
muslin for two short curtains	3 ⁵⁰
2 pillows, square. Used also for cushions and bolsters	6 ⁰⁰
4 "	5 ⁰⁰
2 pillow slips	2 ⁸⁰
3 chairs	7 ⁰⁰

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	fr. c.
1 table, round, with flaps	7 ⁰⁰
buffet	6 ⁰⁰
2 soup plates	60
3 dinner plates	75
4 smaller plates	80
3 better plates	2 ¹⁰
3 cups	1 ⁴⁵
3 saucers (plates)	45
2 large cups	90
1 small jug	60
3 fire-proof dishes	2 ¹⁵
2 „ „ saucepans	2 ³⁵
1 teapot	1 ¹⁰
6 small cups for salt, etc., $\frac{1}{2}d.$ each	30
4 planks for bookshelves	3 ⁰⁰
1 plank (very wide for wardrobe)	1 ⁵⁰
hooks for same	1 ¹⁵
rod and rings for same	1 ⁴⁵
12 wooden supports for fixing same, 25 c. each	3 ⁰⁰
nails	30
narrow shelves for dresser	1 ⁵⁰
2 cases for making pantry, etc.	1 ²⁰
1 small cooking stove	14 ⁹⁵
legs for same	2 ⁹⁵
stove pipe for same	1 ⁹⁵
shovel	40
rake and poker, brushes	2 ⁶⁰
1 large green jug	2 ⁵⁰
1 yellow basin	40
1 soap dish	25
1 small table (for washstand)	3 ⁰⁰
1 oil stove	1 ⁹⁵
2 candlesticks	1 ²⁰
door mat	75
boot brush	1 ²⁵
pegs	35
broom, cullender, saucepan	1 ²⁵
lamp shade	95
1 lamp	2 ⁷⁵
salt box	15
2 wooden spoons	10

	fr. c.
2 mops	30
1 shovel	40
1 kettle	85
1 basket	1'65
1 enamel bowl for washing up	1'15
1 iron stewpan	2'95
oilcloth (for covering washstand, etc.)	1'60
5 metres stuff for cushion covers	4'25
7 metres braid for same	1'75
3 curtain rods and 6 dozen rings	3'75
stuff for sofa covers	3'60
tintacks and hooks	75
1 Breton jug	1'25
lamp scissors	2'10
1 methyated spirit lamp	1'45
1 candlestick	85
tapisserie	1'15
oyster knife	75

And from the American

carpet	3'00
1 pair muslin curtains, rods, and rings	3'00
2 saucepans	45
1 water can	70
1 coffee mill	1'00
1 small knife board	25
5 glasses	25
spoons and forks	1'00
1 easy chair (wickerwork)	1'00
1 ashpan	30
1 frying pan	40
1 saucepan	30
1 looking glass	1'25
1 lamp	1'75
1 lamp with shade	4'00
1 broom	50
1 toilet pail	3'00
1 string bag	25
1 sofa cover	4'00
1 dustpan	30

 251'45

PART II

THE WORKING OF THE CUBBYHOUSE

I

"SQUEAK, squeak," and the milk bottle bumps against the front door.
I open my eyes sleepily and instantly turn over. . . .

"Scrape, scrape, scrape," and a faint sound of footsteps.

"The bread. Ten minutes more. . . ."

Rattle, rattle, rattle, and a bang with the tea tray flavour of stage thunder. The bread shop opposite opening its shutters.

I get out of bed in a hurry, that means 7.0. There is a good hour's work before breakfast and we have to start for the Sorbonne at 8.30, for students' lectures are nearly always in the morning, and it takes half an hour to get there: twenty-five minutes sharp walking, four minutes fleeing down corridors and up staircases and signing the attendance book (which is shut up and carried away when the class begins), and one minute to settle in one's seat. So I get out of bed quickly, calling Richard through the open door of The Room. He sleeps in the Pentagon because he sits up later.

The first thing to do, even before dressing, is to open the front door and stretch a hand round to unhook the milk bottle, saving the bread as it falls inward, and take it quickly into the Pentagon where the chocolate, already prepared, lies a delicious brown glaze in the bottom

of the saucepan, fill the saucepan with milk and set it over the little oil stove. If you put it over the methy-lated spirit lamp it burns the thick chocolate at the bottom before that can mix with the milk, so it heats over the oil stove while I dress.

At short range I call Richard more effectually, and, though I can't afford to waste much time over it, I do usually succeed in getting a fairly intelligible grunt at this stage.

Then I run back into the other room and dress, or rather, I lay all the foundations of dressing, reserving the finishing touches until the house work is done.

At intervals I also call Richard. He always says he is wide awake, he generally says he's getting up, but I know by the sound he's still in bed and often that he is fast asleep again. Richard simply hates getting up and would do nearly anything to put off the evil hour. This is his time of grace. The moment I am what the French call "*en jupe et camisole*," which in my case is an old dressing gown cut in two to give me more freedom, I take my broom, dusters, dustpan, and the ashpan from the kitchen and go back into the Pentagon. Richard has to get up in earnest; for the first thing I do is to strip the bedclothes from the bed and hang them over a chair in front of the window and open it, throwing the carpet over the railing at the same time. Then I turn the mattress up on end, stir the chocolate, cover it up with a saucer, shut the door, and leaving Richard to dress in my room, fall to on the baby stove.

All the cinders have to be taken from the inside, two handfuls, perhaps, all the ash raked from underneath, all the soot extracted from the flues which run along the top of the stove over the oven, and as much as possible from the pipe which takes the smoke up into the chimney. A good deal can be got down by judicious tapping on the outside of the pipe and careful raking inside, but from

time to time I have to get up earlier and disconnect the pieces of pipe (an "elbow" and a pipe proper) and clean them out thoroughly. Then I blacklead the grate and put back the burnable cinders in the shovel and leave them on the top of the stove ready for Richard, who lights the fire.

Then I give the chocolate another stir, cover it up again, and put that back on the top of the stove too out of the way.

Then the bedclothes having been well aired at the open window I make the bed. I make it up to the top sheet and the rug which serves as a blanket, but without putting on the square pillows (two, because there is no bolster) and the wadded coverlet. These I leave in a heap on the top, while I sweep, first behind the bed, then, pushing that back, the rest of the room.

Richard, meanwhile, has also been busy, emptying dirty water down the lavatory at the top of the stairs and fetching clean water from the tap there. Just about this time he comes back into the Pentagon, his hands full of newspaper, wood, and charcoal in a bag.

The first thing he always says in any month from October to May, sometimes after, is "Brrr . . . It's cold."

He hates cold quite as much as getting up. So I hurry up the sweeping, get the carpet shaken out of the window, and the window shut.

For the time being my work in the Pentagon is ended, so I shut the door, leaving Richard in possession to light the fire and attend to the chocolate.

He lights the fire by lighting a piece of paper and putting it into the stove, by dropping pieces of fire-wood one by one on to the burning paper, and by adding charcoal judiciously and also piece by piece on the flamingest places. When the charcoal catches he shuts down the top and, taking out the little drawer with it

brass knob (which is the stove's ashpan), he blows the fire gently and discriminatingly from underneath. If he has done all this properly, and with care, and I have cleaned the flues thoroughly and the pipes are free of soot, and the wind isn't in the one wrong quarter, then the charcoal burns a bright red, and you drop on small lumps of coal, add the cinders, and in about half an hour the fire is well alight and the whole stove hot. Otherwise . . . otherwise, there's smoke and charcoal fumes and . . . temper.

The days we are both going to a 9.0 lecture we do not light the fire, but have our breakfast ready dressed in our overcoats. This, however, was seldom, for after a very little while Richard developed a speciality which took him in quite a different direction from the prescribed course for the "Licence ès Lettres" which I continued.

Meanwhile I make my own bed, also leaving out the pillows and the wadded coverlet, and turning it into quite an elegant sofa by putting on its specially made cover.

Then I sweep the room and the entry, polish the front door knob, shake the doormat, wipe down the wash-basin and the famous table now proudly covered with white American cloth and draped in tapestry, and dust the room.

Then I open the door of the Pentagon and discover immediately if the fire is burning, Richard placid, the window shut, or whether the room is full of smoke, Richard coughing, the window open, the chocolate neglected, and the whole atmosphere charged with aggravation.

It is a curious thing to me and a never-ending source of astonishment even now, that Richard, who is possessed of phenomenal patience over all the big things of life, who will wait years if need be for events to slowly ripen

without ever pulling them up to see what's happening, or spoiling everything by giving a mighty shake, who suffers the stupidest or the most aggravating person with an unruffled courtesy and his own peculiar smile, who has never known what it is to get swept away with a blind tempest of rage, even as a child, does get quite irritable and ruffled in his temper over inanimate objects, such as newspapers that tumble down when you put them up, or fires that smoke because the wind is wrong (he gets cross with the wind), or with trains that the company won't run when he wants them, while I, who am by nature both impatient and quick tempered and want to shake stupid people and hurry up the universe generally, am prepared to endure the wind because I can't alter it, and put the newspapers somewhere else because they are too big for the shelf. Fundamentally I suppose the difference is I realise the things are not responsible and can't alter themselves, but think the people are and should. While Richard, realising that the inanimate things have no feelings, knows they can't be injured by his irritation and human beings can. So while his crossness generally affects no one but himself, mine getting vented on the person affects both of us and at the same time defeats my purpose of bettering the universe, for bad temper never cured any fool of his folly or quickened the slow growths of time. At this period, however, we were both a continual source of astonishment to each other, and I will own to a secret sense of satisfaction at Richard's "crossness" (very mild in form) which made him humanly imperfect and not too far removed from my own level of hot-tempered impatience. It was then *I* felt superior, which is always consoling and so productive of good temper. And I would put away the newspapers radiating satisfaction. It was really quite disappointing of him to give me so few opportunities.

When I open the door of the Pentagon, all being well, I find the fire burning, the cloth on the table, the chocolate poured out. As boiling chocolate takes some time to cool to drinking point, I have still time to dust the room, to put the square pillows into their frilled cushion covers, to fold the two wadded coverlets into squares and put them into cushion covers too, to turn the *sommier* into a sofa with a piece of tapestry, and the cushions arranged against the wall.

Meanwhile, Richard is bringing coal from the drawer under the stove in the kitchen, where it lives (all kitchen stoves in Paris have a drawer underneath for coal), into the Pentagon and cherishing his fire. Then the work being finished, I dress and we sit down to breakfast. On Thursday and Sunday mornings I have the kitchen to clear up and its red-tiled floor to wash with soft soap before I wake Richard.

And so for a space of two years on every work-day morning of the week the cubbyhouse got up, got washed, brushed, and dusted, got itself ready for work and for life, for the work and the life which alone matter, but which alone are possible when the rest is done.

Cubbyhouse taught us this lesson with an insistent certainty.

II

At half-past eight, after having made up the fire, consulted the weather by hanging out of the window, and enumerated all the things necessary to take with us, we shut the door of the cubbyhouse and descend our 108 steps. When one lives on the sixth story one does not wait to decide on the doorstep whether an umbrella shall be taken or not; nor does one "just run back" to fetch one's purse, or one's pipe, or one's notebook, or one's

overcoat, or anything else. One hundred and eight stairs and six landings are 108 plus 6 aids to memory, and I know none better.

Whether we are both, or whether I alone am going to a lecture, we always start together, down the boulevard, down the Bréa and the Vavin, and into the Luxembourg Gardens by the gate opposite the rue Vavin and behind the little closed, one-roomed shanty gaily painted in stripes and windowless called the *École d'Apiculture* where once a month the ardent bee culturists assemble for a "cours," delivered in the room, and a practical demonstration in the little hedged-in enclosure just opposite.

The beehives of the enclosure are invisible to the passer-by, but the heads of the audience can be seen above the green hedges. For the most part seemingly rotund, retired "commerçants," who after an industrious life in shops or warehouses have withdrawn to Villeneuve-St. Georges, to St. Cloud, to Bourg-la-Reine, or one or other of what we would call the suburbs without the fortifications and they call "*à la campagne*" (the country), to cultivate French vegetables in a walled-in garden all beds and gravel paths attached to a high, narrow, brick house, always standing a few feet away from the heavy iron gate made impenetrable to the view by a backing of sheet iron which always opens straight on to the main road. "Commerçants" of both sexes, both equally rotund, the men buttoning an exuberant underchest into a white waistcoat, and the women almost invariably in black with stylish hats and a sombreness relieved by colour or more often by the glitter of jet.

The school of apiculture was a standing source of interest to us, its persistent though slender body of students making up in individual bulk what they lacked in corporate numbers. To see them packed into the

small enclosure of the bee-farm, balanced on three-legged stools, steadily but unevenly sinking into the brown earth, while they observed invisible bees beneath dripping umbrellas in a strong wind, was to get a respect for the intellectual enthusiasm of the retired tradesmen of Paris and their fundamental interest in the "arts appertaining to agriculture" which even after a lifetime of trading in towns was still vigorous and effective. There is no model bee-farm in Regent's Park nor do the retired tradesmen of Willesden, Acton, Finchley, and Highgate attend classes in a school of apiculture there. I cannot imagine the government endowing it or the tradesmen attending it.

After going round the side of the bee-farm our path across the Luxembourg skirted what is called the English Garden there, meaning grass in lawns set with flower-beds and clumps of flowering shrubs, which forms the southern boundary of the garden, and is the playing ground of the children of the quarter. Then it ran under plane trees planted in straight rows in the bare brown earth, with the beaten earth court of the "jeu de paume" on our left, and came out three-quarters of the way round the sunk semi-circle of stiff beds and stone benches set in the gravel paths which is the immediate garden of the Luxembourg Palace, so to speak, and being artificially on a dead level while the rest of the garden slopes, is bounded by a stone balustrade of varying height pierced with flights of shallow stone steps. We skirted the balustrade and then struck diagonally across under the stiff rows of plane trees which fill all the bare earth between it, the Medici fountain, and the iron railings in the "Boul' Miche."

This part of the garden is pre-eminently the part of the students. Here wonderful beings in baggy blue velveteen trousers, black sash ties, and weird, strange-shaped, soft felt hats sit sprawling on green folding chairs

accompanied by feminine belongings and talk, and talk, and talk. This is a type of student I myself never encountered in the actual "cours" of the University, and I used to wonder where they really hailed from.

Was it from the "Faculté" of medicine? They didn't look like it, and the medical students of Paris have a deserved reputation for seriousness and hard work.

Was it from the Law? The rowdiest Faculty in the University and the one comprising the largest number of idlers. For the rich young men of France who come up to the University with no intention of working always inscribe themselves in the "Faculté de Droit."

Or were they Art students? Personally I could never trace them to anywhere and was forced in the end to believe that they were not real students at all, in the sense of working at anything anywhere, but simply young men who came to live in the quarter (possibly inscribing themselves at some Faculty somewhere) just in order to riot in the traditional places in the traditional manner of the students of Murger. They came into no student life that I encountered which was the working life of the University and Art students.

Then out of the Luxembourg by the gate just south of the Odéon fountain, across the road diagonally to the "Boul' Miche," a little way down it north, up by the Café d'Harcourt and the broad short street leading to the church of the Sorbonne now incorporated in the immense square of the modern University buildings, round to the left, and in at the gateway in the quadrangle of the "Faculté des Lettres" by the side of the "École des Chartes," or else round the corner and in at the big door in the rue des Écoles opposite the Musée Cluny.

When I was going to a lecture alone Richard turned back somewhere among the plane trees and went home again, a space of time which reached the very limit of our fire's endurance. There always did seem to be a

lecture for me at 9.0 in the morning, often another at 10.0 or at 11.0. When the second lecture came at 10.0 I went straight back after it was over and did house-work for the hour before lunch. When it came at 11.0 I spent the interval in the University library and got back just in time to serve an already prepared lunch—which Richard had watched cooking for me as he did work within three inches of the Pentagon stove. I always prepared an exhaustive time-table of cooking events for him so that he simply put saucepans on the stove at 11.0, stirred their contents at 11.30, and removed them at 12.0, like a mechanical cooker. And the plan succeeded quite well, only I did have to think things out to their lastest and most easily forgettable detail first.

And when there was no second lecture I went straight to the library at 10.0 and had a good hour or so there, getting back at 12.0 with half an hour to see to lunch myself.

Wednesdays and Saturdays at 11.0 I started for the market, and luckily this didn't interfere with any lectures. Those days we had oysters for lunch in the winter (Portuguese at 4*d.* a dozen), and an omelette in the summer. And always summer and winter fresh salad after and new-made creamy cheeses. The French have a dozen or more varieties of cream cheese of all shades of stiffness and creaminess, from those you cut with a knife and eat with salt to those you eat liquid with a spoon and sprinkle with sugar.

Two days a week Richard spent a whole long afternoon at special classes in the "École des Hautes Études," while I generally seemed to have a lecture at 2.0 and often another at 3.0, or later in the afternoon.

Wednesdays and Saturdays at 5.0 precisely I went into my extensive kitchen and cooked hard until 7.30, sometimes later. And so to my everlasting regret I was forced to miss the Philosophy lectures of M. Boutroux,

for they came at 5.0 on Wednesdays, and when I tried to fit them in the life of the cubbyhouse just wouldn't work. To run the rest at all cooking had to be done in bulk twice a week and on market days.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays, therefore, we dined sumptuously, and the rest of my big cook gave us dinners for half of each week and the substantial part of our lunches as well. I was very tired on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, indeed there were times when after cooking the dinner I had to have a little sleep first before I could eat my share of it, I was so very tired. Still the dinners were good and that consoled me.

As I got lunches and dinners Richard took over the tea and, after the first week while he was learning, for the whole time of our stay in the cubbyhouse to get tea was his affair entirely. And to this day the habit is so strong within me that I never put tea in a teapot myself without an extra glow of virtue spreading within me at the taking on my shoulders of a duty manifestly not mine.

Richard's tea was extremely good. Possessing a scientific mind and a distrust of his domestic capabilities he went by strict rule, accurate measurement, and a chronometer; of tea just so much to a tea-leaf, of water so much to a drop, infusion so long to a second, always just so and always the same, and the result was the best tea with the least expenditure of tea leaf that I have ever drunk. His bread and butter too was quite first class and would have earned any parlour-maid distinction. We always enjoyed our tea both of us, Richard because he loves tea for itself, and I because I had nothing to do with the getting of it. In fact we liked it so much that outside of term time, or on those days when we weren't at lectures, I really had to make a rule that tea must not come until the clock said something to four. (We lunched at 12.30 remember.) The

something to four was sometimes twenty-nine minutes, but still it was "to four" and not "past three."

The time after tea on the days when I was not cooking was time free for working up lecture notes, for reading, for the absolutely necessary sewing. Richard, of course, worked all day long with only short domestic interludes.

At 7.0 I began to get dinner ready. At 7.30 we sat down to it, with the table up against the stove, with all we wanted to eat, including our coffee, keeping warm upon it, with fresh plates behind me on the buffet, with bread and wine behind Richard on the draped dress basket standing on the top of a cabin trunk, familiarly known from its shape and drapery as The Family Altar, and with space enough there to put the used plates and empty dishes as we finished with them. So that, everything ready, we never stirred from end to end of our meals, and those who serve themselves will know how much this means.

At 8.0 we took our coffee pot off the stove, the cups from the mantelpiece above it (all without moving). At about 8.30 or a little sooner we struggled up—having worked hard all day and dined well—took the kettle of water for washing up from the stove, took the dinner things into the kitchen, and I washed up in a bowl on the top of the cold kitchen stove.

Richard stood in the entry and received the wet plates as I passed them to him over my shoulder to dry and piled them on to a chair placed just inside the first room. And when plates, glasses, forks, spoons, cups, and saucers were ready and the chair could hold no more he took them away and went back into the Pentagon to put them up on the dresser above the mantelpiece, to shake the table-cloth out of the window, fold it up, and put it away in the drawer in the buffet, to shut up one half of the round table and put that back in its place across the corner beside *the* window, and to come back

and fetch a saucepan with a slab of chocolate in it and just so much water to put on the stove and dissolve carefully for our breakfast next morning; while I washed up saucepans, frying pans, and dishes, and tidied up the kitchen generally.

Then Richard took down our kitchen ashpan, which was the dustbin of the flat, and emptied it into the common receptacle in the court of the house, and wound up his duties for the day by filling the jugs with water at the tap on the landing.

Meanwhile I had stirred the dissolved chocolate carefully to get it smooth, seen that it boiled for exactly ten minutes, and taken it off the stove, leaving it covered up beneath a saucer for the morning.

That finished our work for the day; and at something after 9.0 we settled down, one on each side of the table, the lamp in the middle, to talk perhaps or to read until I began to tumble asleep in my chair at anything before 10 o'clock. Then if I wasn't too sleepy I struggled up, took the tapestry off the sofas, the four pillows out of their covers, and so turned the sofas into beds again. If I was too sleepy Richard did it. And at 10.0 or a little after I lay down in my own bed in my own room and, lulled by the distant rush of the trams in the boulevard a hundred feet beneath, went straight to sleep. And the bright streak of yellow light beneath the door of the Pentagon was the last thing my tired eyes saw as they closed, and it told me Richard was still up and still working.

And so the cubbyhouse day began and ended in hard work and sound sleep, and fuller, completer days have never come to either of us. As I look back now there seems to me more work, more life, more stuff of the everlasting, pressed into those simple, enthralling cubbyhouse days than has ever fallen to either of us before or since, for we had entered into our kingdom, our very own, and were possessing it.

III

Paris is a city of markets, of real markets with little stalls, canvas-covered, where what with us would be merely the nomadic hawker has on certain days his fixed abode and name. Every arrondissement of Paris, that is to say, about every parish in the city, has its market, and here a certain definite and distinct class of traders have their place of business, their perambulating shops which are here to-day and across Paris to-morrow.

These traders, buying direct from the big "Halles," the central market of the city, or from the actual producers, and having no establishment to keep up, can sell their wares at cheaper rates than the shops of the district, and invariably their goods are fresher. The salads of the market will have been cut that morning, early, or at the latest the night before, for the market opens at nine and shuts at three. It is held nearly always in the open space of a wide boulevard, of a public square, or perhaps in certain districts under the roof of a special building.

Some arrondissements hold markets once a week, some twice, a few oftener; but whenever they are held and however often they draw all the housewives of the parish to their stalls. Even the most popular of provision shops are deserted on those days, while the stalls of the markets where meat, fish, poultry, sausages, butter, eggs, fruit, and vegetables are sold are crowded. The usual parish market is a market for provisions and not generally for dried or cooked goods. With the exception of live stock and raw material it is the market of the country town still held in the parishes of the capital.

The markets are town-ordered and town-regulated and a gendarme is always on duty. The stalls have to

be put up and cleared away within stated hours. Permission to sell must be applied for and granted by the authorities. Every stall-holder has an official number like a motor car or a bicycle and once a year they all ballot for places. And the prosperous people who do the most trade if they are not fortunate enough to get a best position buy out the winner. Mr. Butcher Charles Le Gros had either right-hand or left-hand top corner stall of our quarter's market all the years of his trading, from the fifth before the cubbyhouse was made until the spring of this year of writing.

Demanded by the housewives of the city, supported by them, the institution of the parish market is firmly fixed in France. For they appear to realise that besides serving as a continual check upon the prices of the shops around it and on the quality of their goods, it also offers a means of getting the consumer into closer touch with the producer and so lessening some at least of the cost of distribution, and of the middleman's profits; profits which threaten often to crush both the producer and the consumer under one common burden, grinding down the first beneath the lowest price and the second under the highest. It is an effective want effectively supplied.

The French housewife, especially the housewife of the lower middle classes, is no amateur at her work, but a skilled professional. She understands the great art of spending, of exchanging coin for commodities—the only reason why in the first case the coin has been earned—but which the earner rarely carries into effect himself, but all over the civilised world has always put upon the shoulders of the women—a not really successful division of labour, because the earner, remembering he alone gets coin, has always overrated his share of the work, and the spender, not earning it, has never received due recognition of her share in the transaction; nor,

being cut off from the direct responsibility of existence, that of maintaining oneself, has she been able to prevent herself from falling on parasitic ways. But in France, anyway, the housewife accepting this division of the work of existence has specialised in her task. She has learnt her business. She is a qualified buyer. She understands a market. She knows prices. She has got a firmer hold on the fundamentals of economics as they relate to the commodities in which she deals, though knowing little of text-books, than the writers of those text-books themselves, for she has had the invaluable practical experience of working out her problems in "real herrings." So she takes her stand on a firmer ground, the ground of life itself.¹ In what other country in the world would the provision strikes of 1911 have been possible?

These strikes, orderly riots as they were, were organised and carried out by the respectable housewives of the middle classes. I cannot yet see the mistress of the English suburban villa, the country attorney's wife, the chemist's lady, the postmaster's spouse, and the gardener's missis uniting in an orderly band to overturn egg-baskets and butter-barrels to insist on their demands, thought out beforehand, for best fresh at 1s. 4d., rump steak at 1s., mutton legs at 8d. a lb., and go on insisting until these demands are satisfied.

¹ In the classes that run to a "bonne" or "bonnes" it is part of the maid's duty to do the marketing. She takes a recognised commission of a sou ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.) in the franc on all purchases. And many Frenchwomen will tell you that in spite of this tax the marketing is done more cheaply than they could do it themselves because the shopkeepers would make them "pay for their hats" (charge them more for belonging to the class that goes shopping in hats). But whether in person or by deputy the Frenchwoman knows the prices of her market with a sure knowledge and will not be imposed upon, while it is still always the purchaser who does the choosing, not the seller as when one "gives an order."

The cost of living, whose two main items are rent and provisions, having risen over 15 per cent. in ten years, the housewife attacked that part of it which came especially within her division of the labour of existence, she organised against the price of provisions. The men on their side have not yet struck against the rise in rent, and although they have struck, some of them, for rises in wages, this will be of little ultimate use until they screw themselves up to follow the example of their wives and strike against rent as well, for until then, let the housewives stand ever so firm, all the surplus will but go down that fathomless pit labelled rent.

Destitute of any training in the whole field of domestic economy practical or theoretical, ignorant even of the points to look for in purchasing a mutton chop, the price to pay for it, or the method of converting it into food when bought, I was lucky indeed to get my first training in the best school of professional housewives that I have ever met. A practical school whose curriculum includes the market-place as well as the hearthstone, and so stands on a much firmer and more satisfying ground.

Part, I think, of the position of the French wife, of the Frenchwoman, so different from ours, so much higher in some ways, so much lower in others, usually highest just where ours is lower and lowest where ours is higher, comes from this knowledge of hers. In the accepted division of the world's work which leaves the earning to the men and the spending to the women, the Frenchwoman at any rate has undertaken the whole of her sphere, and so gets more recognition as an equal. She has made her power as a buyer felt because she has learnt her trade as a buyer, and she does meet man in the market-place because she has added the market-place to the home as a necessary part of even that world. Accepting in the main the "sphere of the

home" as her life's work, she has so fulfilled it, so enlarged it just by following it out to its logical consequences, that it has led her back into the market-place again and given her a recognised position there. Whether cause of this or effect, the enormous business talent of the Frenchwoman is a fact, and can be seen just as plainly in the capacity for management of the average housewife, as in the building up of a business like the Bon Marché, or in the running of any retail shop, nine-tenths of which are managed entirely by women. As Richard once said, in an outburst of epigram, "In France the woman runs the business and the husband, dutifully, runs the errands."

And it is true. After much experience we have accepted it as an axiom of travel that the hotel (I speak of course of the indigenous French hotel, not of the cosmopolitan palace) run by a woman is always good, whereas the hotel run by a man only may be.

Our market was a case in point. The majority of the stalls were run by the women only, and of the rest those that owned men could be classed almost entirely by the women who belonged to them. Even Mr. Butcher Charles Le Gros, an admirable tradesman himself, owed more than half his success to his wife. Madame Charles Le Gros knew what you wanted by the look of you, produced it, and sold it you even when you yourself were not quite sure of the point, even inclined to combat it, and she was right. You knew that afterward when you came to eat your purchase. I am not taking myself as a standard, for I started by being an ignoramus and only ended up an amateur, never attaining to the heights of the experts all around me. I took the experts and learnt this from them.

Part of the success of the French business man or woman, of the retail trader generally, is his ability to feel a genuine enthusiasm in his wares. He feels towards

them as an artist to his material or his creations. He is an artist.

"Look now," fat Monsieur Charles Le Gros would say, pointing to a dangling mutton leg, one among many, "Look now at this joint, how superb! See the meat, how red! And the casing of the fat, how white! Regard the lean when I cut it, how clean and how evenly it falls apart. And the bone, ah, the bone which tells the good housewife many tales, observe it, madame, for yourself, its colour, its contour. See the marrow within, rich as butter, the . . . Madame would prefer that morsel? Good, it is as madame wishes, certainly. Not so much bone there and the lean somewhat richer in its red. True. But the perfume of this one," offering the rejected joint to the purchaser—"the perfume! Sentez-le, madame, je vous en prie. A perfume delicate, odorous, is it not so? A perfume of the meadow near the sea. And, as madame knows, it is the perfume which gives the flavour. And what, I ask of you, is a good joint, tender, with red juice, cooked to a turn, without flavour? Madame agrees, I knew it. Boned then, *mon garçon*, and prepared with thyme and herbs and salt within. *C'est ça*. Je compte cinquante sous, deux francs cinquante. Sur trois, et voilà une pièce de dix sous. Je vous remercie, madame. Au revoir, madame. Et maintenant à nous."

And so to the next customer and to the next from 9 till 3.

Monsieur Charles Le Gros was a good trader, but his gifts were not different in kind from those of the others, only in degree. They could all get enthusiastic over the points of their own goods, meat, cheese, butter, vegetables, even over a pennyworth of herbs or of carrots and turnips. They all knew them. For you perhaps to find the bad ones; but the good ones they showed you were good, and were real, and they pointed them out to you

as one artist to another, enjoying themselves in the process as an artist would.

By listening hard to the sellers alone I should have learned much, but I had the buyers too.

I have not yet forgotten my first cabbage lesson. That was given me by the most elegantly dressed lady of the quarter who came to market followed by her maid bearing baskets. And I stood by the side of the vegetable stall while she chose two summer cabbages from a triangular pile on the pavement.

First she stood and looked at the heap, row by row, carefully, deliberately comparing one with another. Then having picked out by this means a certain number as worthy of further trial, she proceeded to feel them carefully with her neatly gloved hand, and finally, having reduced the number of competing cabbages to six, she pulled these from the pile and weighed them in her hands one against the other, turning back the outside leaves of the heart as she did so and studying it carefully. Meantime both the owner and the maid stood by and offered suggestions which she received or rejected as one who knew. Finally after a certain hesitation between the last three she chose two cabbages, paid for them, and departed, leaving the owner quite amiably to build up his disarranged triangle again.

As French market sellers go he was taciturn, but even he while giving the change and helping the maid to fit the cabbages into the basket had remarked lyrically on the colour "*d'un vert si tendre, si coloré,*" and it had evidently pleased him that she should have chosen the very best cabbages in the pile. Moreover, he expected to have to rearrange them again.

Humbly I followed after my teacher. I could not tell the principles of her first selection, for I did not know the points she was looking for and which her experienced eye had found, but I could pinch the same cabbages she

had pinched and see what they felt like, and try to discover why they were chosen and the rest left. I could weigh them one against the other though my senses were all undeveloped in this direction. But even though I did turn back the outside leaves of the heart and examine it resolutely, it kept, as the heart will, its secret.

There were perhaps some hundred or more stalls in our market, making a long row down each side of the middle pavement in the boulevard Edgar Quinet, and the space in the middle was always full of people, the better-off buyers coming in the morning to get first choice and the poorer ones in the afternoon to get the better bargains. But morning or afternoon the market was always crowded. And over all the various noises of footsteps and chatter, of bargaining and buying, of weighing and rolling, and chopping and wrapping, would come the shrill voice of a vendor:

"Les belles Valences. Deux sous mes belles Valences." (Oranges, my beautiful oranges. One penny my beautiful oranges.)

Valence being the most northerly spot in France where oranges can grow is popularly supposed to have given its name to the home-grown fruit, though Littré traces it to the Spanish town. Or the little song of the fishmonger:

"Je vends des beaux maquereaux. Achetez-en mes beaux maquereaux." (I sell fine mackerel. Buy of my fine mackerel.)

And then dominating it all suddenly the cry of a real coster, a hawker who sold everything in season and nothing long, raucous and loud:

"Raisins, raisins secs, raisins." (Raisins.) Or "Raisins. Six sous le livre, des belles grappes." (Grapes, six half-pennies a pound and beautiful bunches.) Or again:

"Asperges, des asperges. Vingt sous la botte." (Asparagus, asparagus, 10d. a bundle.)

With the first syllable thirty seconds long and more.

And then above the noise would come the persuasive accents of a "marchande" wheedling a reluctant buyer, a large fat lady of the people perhaps, hatless, faultlessly coiffured, with a blue apron, and her arms folded over a huge double-covered basket; persuading her with a flow of language that a politician or a poet might envy, punctuated at each phrase with such epithets as "ma belle" (my beautiful one) or "ma petite" (my little one), even in the excitement of the moment rising to a "little rabbit" or the untranslatable "ma mignonne," a love term straight from the Middle Ages and coming laden with all the poetry of the past. How the sounds bring back the picture! No one is too fat, too old, too shabby, to be beautiful, little, or "mignonne" in France.

And then the food. So daintily set out even here! The green mass of the cabbages in piles; the fish in their beds of green rushes; the yellow and white cheeses in rows and patterns; the button mushrooms in drabby-white heaps; the big mounds of butter always wrapped in their muslin cloths; and all the exotic vegetables and provisions which marked the country and the climate. "Crosnes," those strange shell-shaped little tubers of such a penetrating delicious flavour, and quite unnaturally accurately moulded in the whorls and convolutions of a shell; the large, deep green artichokes with their sharp pointed rows of blade-like leaves; the curved egg plants like purple commas; the straight sticks of the salsify; the enormous yellow-orange pumpkins, sold in slices at a penny each for making soup; the ripe figs, black and juicy; the pomegranates; the long curling endive and all the other green salads of an infinite variety, such as "mâche" (corn salad), chicory, plain and curled, dandelions, half a dozen different kinds of lettuce which last all the year round. Then the bunches

of delicious small carrots round or long, pulled young and eaten as a vegetable, not just as an accompaniment to boiled beef or an addition to a vegetable soup; the delicious *soissons* (large haricot beans from the Soissons region) sold when they first come in in their yellow pods, so that you cook and eat bean, pod, and all; the red cabbages, never pickled but served as vegetables; the green sorrel with its red stem; the bunches of turnips, long and white like blanched fingers; the great drabby rounds of the root celery; the mounds of the tomatoes, larger than apples, at 2*d.* a pound and 3½*d.* the kilo (a little over two pounds). The fruit in its season, the tiny round wild strawberries, eaten with red wine, the nectarines, peaches, apricots large and luscious to our northern eyes scorned by the true meridional as only "food for pigs"; the grapes in masses and bunches, not the large, watery, hot-house grapes as we know them, nor the thick-skinned, hard, imported variety, but the real, small, full-juiced wine-grape, thin of skin and delicate of flavour; the small round yellow plums called "mirabelle," the quinces and medlars. And always everything not picked and priced for its size, but picked and priced for its flavour, vegetables pulled young when they are full of sap and savour, not cut on the other edge of maturity when they weigh more, have grown larger, and lost in quality and flavour. For the standard set by French taste is high and all through the country and the community customers insist on getting what they want.

So I, straight from so different an upbringing in the well-off suburbs of London, brought up to no trade or profession, not even to that of a housewife, innocent as the babe unborn of actual economics, of prices, and provisions, was plunged straight into this market of professional housewives to learn as best I could how it worked and what it meant.

IV

Every Wednesday and Saturday, at about half-past ten, for two years I went to market. In each hand I took a string bag (they are cheaper than baskets though not so convenient) and I went round the corner into the boulevard, and down it to its junction with the Raspail, across the mouth of both and up the rue de Lambre into the exact top of the market.

I started at about half-past ten, if I was able, or as soon after as lectures and house cleaning permitted, and my first visit was always to my friend M. Charles Le Gros—unless we were going to have poultry in the shape of a wing of a turkey, the half of a chicken (great treats), or half a rabbit. Poultry and game of this kind are always sold both whole and “détaillé” (cut up) in France, so that you can buy just as much as you need and no more; of course “détaillé” comes a little dearer a pound, that is only fair to the seller, but even then the saving to the small buyer is great, not to mention the convenience.

We had two joints a week whether roast or stewed, and the staple of our dinners therefore was the same for half a week at a time. If I bought fish I bought it on a Wednesday, reckoned to finish it on Thursday, carrying over something like haricot stew for Friday.

Mr. Butcher Charles Le Gros, then, was usually my first visit. As veal is the cheapest meat in France its turn came oftener than beef or mutton, especially beef; and veal was generally stewed in various ways because you got more variety in flavour and more flavour . . . and bought cheaper joints. Mutton after some experimenting resolved itself into the top half of a leg for roasting and what corresponds to the neck for stewing. Beef for

roasting was always "filet," the very best and most expensive joint certainly, but all meat, and then I could get just exactly as little of it as I wanted, and I never bought more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

As animals are cut up in different ways in France joints do not always correspond. Their idea in dividing seems to be to suit the smaller customers better and to be able to sell in lesser portions, and this quite as much with all the more expensive things and the better joints as with the cheaper, indeed perhaps more with the better things in order to bring them within the range of their poorer customers.

To Mr. Charles Le Gros then I went first of all. And if I hadn't definitely made up my mind beforehand, I always took his advice as to the relative merits of beef or mutton that day, and I never regretted it. Taking pity on my ignorance, I think, he taught me from time to time many things, not only about joints, but about how to cut them; explaining to me the mysteries of cutting with the grain or against it, of the effect of salting in roasting, and the superior merit of salting internally before roasting to salting externally at the last moment; why larding was an art. Larding is the threading of fat, generally bacon fat, through meat before cooking. Sometimes we exchanged views about the meat trade. After listening to my accounts of joints in England, unlarded, mostly unboned, and never stuffed with herbs and salt by the butcher, he gave it as his opinion that they, the butchering trade, were "a set of idlers over there, and the customers much too easy with them." His customers wouldn't put up with such a shirking of obvious duties, not they, "certainement." And then, pondering, he made the characteristic French inquiry:

"C'est aussi bonne comme ça, la viande, aussi bonne qu'ici?" (It tastes as good like that, the meat, as good as here?)

And I truthfully would say, "No, Monsieur Le Gros, it doesn't."

"Et alors . . ." he would say, shrugging his shoulders with all he left unsaid eloquently expressed. "Well then . . . what the dickens are they thinking of? Well then . . . it isn't reasonable. Well then . . . if it isn't reasonable what's it done for? Well then . . . mad these English."

And I would smile. I liked Monsieur Le Gros very much. He was so large, and substantial, and practical, and businesslike, and through it all so French. I always remember the day he told me the story of his one journey out of France. For some reason which I forget or never heard he went to Vienna. He stayed there three days, then returned, homesick, to Paris! . . . And I would look at Monsieur Le Gros, so weighty and substantial, and hear him admiring the rich redness of his raw joints as an artist admires a sunset, and imagine him fleeing from Vienna overcome with yearning for the charm of even the meat trade of his native land.

Having got my joint I went to buy the appropriate vegetables to go with it. And I very quickly learned there were appropriate vegetables, and got out of the barbaric idea prevalent in my native land that one vegetable stands in exactly the same kind of relation to a joint as any other, and it is a mere matter of indifference or of convenience as to which should be served.

I learnt, for instance, that cabbage is not an appropriate vegetable to serve with chicken because the flavour of cabbage is strong and of the wrong kind to blend with the delicate taste of chicken. While, on the other hand, veal, for instance, simply demands a full penetrating flavour such as tomatoes or "oseille" (cultivated sorrel), whose slightly acid quality (*rafraîchissant*, refreshing, is the proper French epithet

for it) is particularly appropriate. I learnt that turnips "serve" best, as the French say, with mutton and carrots with beef. I learnt that all the dry vegetables such as haricot beans, broad beans, and most of the cabbage tribe, absorbing fat and being improved by it, "serve" themselves most naturally with pork and its derivatives. And I learned above all that vegetables are dishes by themselves, and that when a kind is plentiful, and good, and cheap, and won't "serve" well with a joint, it is served by itself. And I learnt all these things not only from the cooking side but actually from and at the market.

Then after choosing vegetables to serve with the joint, and vegetables to serve by themselves, and vegetables for lunches, I bought salad; for oysters, salad, cheese, coffee, in the winter, and omelette, salad, cheese, coffee, in the summer, made our lunch on most Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the year. And we learnt to eat and to like all the French salads from chicory to "mâche" except dandelions. Chicory I ate but didn't like much for it is bitter, though Richard liked it. But neither of us ever sufficiently acquired the French palate really to appreciate dandelions, so after trying them once or twice we crossed off dandelions permanently from our menu.

After the meat, the vegetables, and the salad, the next thing to get was the cheese. My cheese stall was kept by a lean, angular spinster dressed always in black wool, one lot wound round her head and another round her body. She wore black woollen mittens too. And yet with all these disadvantages, compared to the lean, angular spinsters of other lands, the "Mademoiselle" of the cheese stall was attractive and elegant. I do not know how she did it, but a certain attractiveness and elegance she certainly possessed. Her hair, of course, under the black wool (what there was of it) was perfectly

coiffured—perfect in the sense that it reached the standard aimed at and did what it set out to do and did it well.

Under her guidance I chose cheese, and as she sometimes ran to thirty-four different cheeses on her stall there was scope for choice. In course of time I think I tried all the thirty-four different varieties even though some of them were expensive, and even though some of them were goat. Even then they weren't as strong as many German cheeses made from cow's milk. The goat cheeses were nearly all cream cheeses of various degrees of softness. They always appeared wrapped up in strange green leaves, a little pat of milky white in the middle of deep green which made them seem exotic and attractive to me anyway. Especially when I found on examining them that the leaves really were strange to northern eyes.

My lady of the cheese stall also sold grated cheese for cooking purposes. You asked for three sous worth, say ($1\frac{1}{2}d.$), of cheese grated and she cut a piece of gruyère, weighed it, and then proceeded to grate it up in a little machine, fastened on to the trestles of her stall, a little machine that looked like a cross between a mincer and a coffee grinder. And she fed the cheese in at the top in pieces and ground it out at the bottom in the smallest flakes. People who serve cheese are expected to grate it for you in France if you want it that way, just as the butchers are expected to bone your meat or stuff it with herbs for you, or the greengrocers to present you with a tiny quantity of fresh herbs as a flavouring to the salad: ciboule (minute onions no bigger than a knitting needle), cerfeuil (a leaf something like parsley), parsley itself, marjoram, or the rest of the herbs out of the English herbery which are only names to us now. You do not eat a lettuce neat in France.

"But I am not a rabbit," they say in astonishment.

You eat it dressed as a salad, that is with a sauce of salt, pepper, mustard, salad oil, and vinegar, carefully mixed in proper proportions, stirred into it and the whole flavoured with the duly chosen herbs.

Then I bought fruit. Puddings being an essentially English invention, about the only one we have contributed to the science and art of cookery, they do not figure largely, if at all, in the French meal. Sweets, their equivalent, being something much more elaborate, are reserved in middle-class households for Sundays and special occasions. The place of the pudding is taken by cheese and fruit, fresh fruit when possible, or preserved fruit, dried or preserved in syrup, or made into what we should call jam which it isn't.

So my next purchase was fruit. And to northern eyes Paris comes as the gateway of the south, and through it one gets the first glimpse of orange trees, of melons and peaches and figs and grapes, in something like the profusion, with something like the flavour, and with, at any rate, all of the naturalness of the indigenous article.

And lastly, when my two string bags were nearly full, I bought butter and eggs, laying the eggs gently on the top that I might not crush them.

So I left the market laden, carrying away with me, besides the tangible marketing, growing understanding of the intangible market and all it means, of the principle of prices and of spending, and a little knowledge of the great art of buying itself.

I forgot to say that the only familiar things I missed from the Paris market were rhubarb, which is grown in France as a handsome plant for its foliage and when cooked is used only as a medicine, and vegetable marrows.

V

There lived in our house, on the third floor, in the "appartement à gauche," a French woman who took boarders—one or two girls studying art, perhaps, or studying French, or merely elderly ladies seeing Paris cheaply and at leisure.

Madame Weisman had a daughter, and a husband who was an employee in the Post Office at a salary of 3000 frs. (£120) a year, and who in spite of his name, the very German shape of his head, his long, blonde moustaches, and a lack of conversation was by upbringing and inclination quite French. His father as a young man had come to France with the German army of occupation and stayed there. He had taken a French wife and settled in Bordeaux, and his children knew no German and felt themselves as French as their neighbours.

Madame herself was "du midi," and of the extreme south, from the slopes of the Pyrenees in fact, and of peasant stock. Up to the age of twelve she had lived and learnt in her native village, up to her marriage she had stayed with a childless aunt in the environs of Bordeaux. The wife of a comfortable "commerçant" in the wine trade, and a lady who marked her position and her wealth by buying a new silk dress every year, and her peasant stock and upbringing by putting it away in her wardrobe and wearing it only on such rare occasions as caused it to last comfortably over five; so that in the course of time she owned a whole garretful of new, never worn, silk dresses while she herself was still wearing with great care and abstemiousness the silk dress of fifteen years before. Yet every year a new one was bought, made after much consultation in the newest fashion, and . . . hung up in the garret with its companions.

In this house with its garretful of silk dresses, in the comfortable villa of the comfortable Bordeaux "commerçant," madame lived until she was married. Then Monsieur Weisman finding himself transferred to Paris, they had left Bordeaux and travelled north, and in Paris they had remained ever since.

In person Madame Weisman was large, good-looking, and fair-complexioned. For education she had had only the government elementary school of her native mountain village, a place too small to be marked on most maps, and the practical domestic training (including the care of silk dresses) of her aunt. Yet failing a qualified Prime Minister, I would rather have seen Madame Weisman managing the affairs of the nation than any one else, for madame carried common sense to the point of genius.

Madame could be wrong; she could never be stupid. She could make mistakes; she could never mismanage. Set her down anywhere in any capacity, and though the trained expert would do better you felt she could never do badly. It was impossible for her to muddle, even the management of things of which she knew nothing, she had too clear a brain, too firm a grasp on essentials, too much of that common sense which is the sense common to all things.

And she lived in our house, on the third floor in the "appartement à gauche." We first came to know her in the interval between the finding and the making of the cubbyhouse. As I said, she took boarders and she engaged to take us as the season was still slack, until the famous 9th of October should arrive. It was much cheaper than a hotel, even a cheap one, and it would have been cheaper had it been dearer, though we did not know that then, because, besides the board and lodging which were charged for, madame bestowed on me gratis long courses in all the Arts of Domestic Economy,

courses which she continued long after the board and lodging ceased, continued, indeed, until we left the cubbyhouse for ever.

The gain to us was immense. The effect on our whole lives incalculable. I cannot imagine what the daily life of the cubbyhouse would have been without her, for it was to her that I owed the very foundations on which it was laid. Not that she ever said "Do this" or "Do that," but I watched what she did and as my mind on domestic matters was an absolute blank, I naturally went and did likewise, adaptations alone excepted.

The whole project of our cubbyhouse had interested her. The fact of our having married as we had to start off and do it seemed to her so foreign, so English, so utterly un-French that the intellectual curiosity of her nation was instantly arrested by it. And the spectacle of a married woman on the threshold of life in a £70 a year ménage without so much as a knowledge of how to cook eggs went to the softest spot in her housekeeper's heart. What she could do to avoid the inevitable shipwreck of such a position should be done.

I feel sure that this was how she looked at it in the light of her logical intellect. And having experience of men and humanity she perfectly, naturally, unblinkingly recognised the enormous importance of dinner to the happiness, the stability even, of any ménage. Without her admirable common sense we might have tried to live off love and high thinking until one or the other was strained to breaking point. It was she who unconsciously but effectively (looking back now how plainly I see it!) always brought me back to the intellectual perception of the material bases on which all life, even that of love and high thinking, necessarily stands. We might perhaps with an effort, and after repeated experience, have realised the fact for ourselves—at the cost of life-long ill-health probably—but what we should never have done

alone, certainly should never have done so smoothly and easily, was to discover the way to do it at all on £70 a year.

Already a few years of hard work on a little income and of English lodging-house cooking had developed a promising kind of dyspepsia in Richard. He had bouts of indigestion which interfered seriously with his work, with the cubbyhouse, with even the serenity of his disposition, and what a life of the haphazard, indigestible, tinned-food variety which we should have led in England would have produced I can realise now only too well. Luckily France and Madame Weisman came to save us from this melancholy fate.

Backed by French housekeeping, with a little study of food values and a hard study of the *Disorders of Digestion* by Sir Lauder Brunton, which I found with uncut leaves in a box on the quays and bought for fourpence, I did battle with Richard's dyspepsia and in course of time routed it completely. It was a long fight and sometimes I nearly gave up in despair thinking it would never be cured, until I really took to heart the fact that diseases run in cycles, and so long as the intervals between the attacks were lengthening, the attacks themselves, even coming on the top of the most carefully thought-out, digestively cooked meals, were no criterion of its cure. So Madame Weisman, with all that she meant and stood for, came at a turning point in our lives.

Madame herself had a very definite course of existence planned out for her family.

"I work now," she said to me, "for the 'dot' of my daughter, and when I have married her I shall give up this flat and we shall go, Monsieur Weisman and I, into the country."

"But monsieur's work?" I said.

"The country quite close to Paris, where he will come in to his work every day."

I asked whether after sixteen years and more of Paris she would like it.

"Who knows?" she answered with a shrug of her shoulders, "*après tout je suis campagnarde aussi moi-même. Without doubt at first I shall miss it. Oh, but yes! I shall miss my Paris, still . . . And Monsieur Weisman he adores digging. It is time he had his turn.*"

Here Monsieur Weisman, perhaps, would look into the kitchen in his undress uniform of list slippers and no waistcoat. He was a great swell in his gold-braided black cloak and "*képi*," and madame would turn to him—

"*N'est-ce pas, mon vieux, tu adores bêcher?*"

"Si," Monsieur Weisman would remark, always chary of his words.

"And, as I say, it is time thou hadst thy turn. Let me but marry Marianne and we will go to the country."

"*C'est entendu*," said Monsieur Weisman, picking up the iron bottle basket in which he fetched up the wine from the cellar and going out again.

When I grew to know madame better I would sometimes ask her if Monsieur Weisman ever talked, for I never heard him say more than two or three words. And she would reply—

"*Non, il n'est pas causeur, mon mari. But, as you see, he could speak when it was necessary. It was he who made the demands of my aunt. He speaks when it needs, no more.*"

And that for a southern Frenchman! But perhaps the deprivation of his adored digging for sixteen whole years had rendered him doubly silent.

We had both of us from the beginning the greatest respect for Monsieur Weisman, and with time a silent friendship grew up between us, especially with Richard. If by chance we had not happened to see him for some time, he would voluntarily appear at the door of our

flat with a message from his wife, or simply as he put it, "To wish us the good-day," and go away again. Once Richard, who opened the door, induced him to come in. He came, and sat in a chair for twenty minutes pulling his long moustaches and saying practically nothing, and with his eyes fixed on the stove all the time. But he told his wife after he found me a "*très bonne ménagère*," the parquet was well polished, the windows clean, the room well arranged, and there was no dirt or dust anywhere. So apparently he used his eyes if not his tongue.

Mademoiselle Marianne was fair, like her father, and with little apparently of her mother's astonishing gifts. But that I soon discovered was the way of the French "*jeune fille*," and however they all manage to develop afterward into the admirable Frenchwoman, when they seem of a different race almost, is puzzling. Mademoiselle Marianne was about seventeen years old and was learning dressmaking.

'It was useful,' as madame said, 'to have a trade, en cas de malheurs, though I intend to marry her shortly,' and dressmaking is a valuable accomplishment in a small ménage.

So Mademoiselle Marianne went every day to a dress-making establishment in the rue de Rennes. And though madame was frankly sceptical as to her real ability she would frequently say—

"After all if she but learns to marry her colours, it is always something. And she is better employed than unemployed while I work for her dot. I shall choose for her carefully, there is need. A husband with a secure position, and a sufficient income, small perhaps, but without risk. She has not a strong head."

I used sometimes to wonder what Mademoiselle Marianne herself thought of her destiny, planned out for her in this manner, but Marianne took it all as one of

the things that are, like the sun or moon, and her blonde head could not have well conceived it otherwise.

"Not too pretty and by nature selfish," madame would say dispassionately summing up her daughter, "but the only one and spoilt. It should not be this spoiling that is truly truth, but still it is done. *On est comme ça, que voulez-vous?*"

And madame would go on with her washing-up.

The curious part was that it was all literally truth. Mademoiselle Marianne was not "too pretty," she was selfish, and spoiling was not good for her, and she certainly was spoilt, within limits, but undoubtedly spoilt. Madame had no illusions on the point. She saw it all quite clearly and continued to do it. She even took into consideration the fact that she would continue to do it, and acted accordingly. And in all that she showed her Frenchness, to an unusual degree, perhaps, but still her fundamental Frenchness.

It is comparatively easy to convince the average French man or woman intellectually of the truth of a thing whatever the subject, but there the matter often ends. Every one in France uses his intellect on a subject with pleasure, avidity even, but having used it and arrived at a conclusion is quite content to let the whole thing rest there. To turn intellectual conviction into action is quite another matter.

It is greatly for this reason that we are considered such a practical nation, because to be convinced of a thing is the preliminary to doing something. The difficulty with us is sufficient intelligence to get conviction. We have never the French joy of using our brains just for the sake of using them, even if the brains are there, and undoubtedly our average is a much stupider average than the French one. Our national prayer should be Meredith's, "More brain, O Lord, more brain."

But nationally the French brain is ahead of its char-

acter, not behind it, and that makes all the difference. All the difference to the future efficiency of the race too, for the French have perceived this, not only perceived it but have already taken that very long step which with them separates action from perception. They have already begun to educate for character. While we remain still unconvinced of even the importance of brain power as a national asset. The more I learnt to know France the more I saw how fundamental this difference of national character is and how important in the understanding of the nations.

When I think of Madame Weisman in her tiny kitchen (a palace to the cubbyhouse, but still distinctly small) surrounded with her plates and dishes to wash up (it was usually at such times that we had our most extensive conversations because then I was not interfering with the work of cooking or cleaning), when I think of her standing in front of her tiled sink, beside her kitchen stove, in the familiar kitchen, handling her themes with an intellectual keenness which I had rarely encountered before in any one and never in any one in her position, delighted to use her brain just for the sake of using it, and able to intellectualise anything she talked about from saucepans to the marriage question, she grows still bigger in my eyes than I thought her then. She has nationalised herself, as it were, and beside herself I see how much she typifies of the real France, of the best which is French.

Then she was just Madame Weisman, my referee in all household matters. It was she who gave me the useful working information about French cooking so that a recipe book became intelligible and I didn't make the mistake of leaving out the pudding basin as the French housewife did when she literally followed the English recipe for Christmas pudding and "Boiled six hours." It was madame who told me of the remnant

days at the Bon Marché; who led me to the market; who told me what to buy to clean a parquet and how to use it when bought; who was ready at a moment's notice to make out a dinner menu for any sum of money I wanted, and when she had planned it from the practical standpoint and I turned it up in my text-books on food values I always found it almost ideally perfect as nearly all French menus are, practical observation of results and an educated taste having been sufficient to bring them to the same conclusions as those of medical experts supported by the most elaborate chemical analyses. Only the French menus are a deal more appetising. There is a lack of charm about the pattern food-value meal which must go far to undo the work of its scientific combinations. Everything is apparently there except the stimulus to appetite to eat it, in other words except the steam to turn the engine.

And so Madame Weissman in her "appartement à gauche" on the third floor stood for very much in our lives and for far more than she or we knew in the economy of the cubbyhouse.

VI

We had been invited by the young American couple to dinner. And getting our best clothes from the depths of the dress basket, we had gone.

The Americans lived on the fifth floor certainly, but they lived in the most sumptuous house of the quarter, a new one with carpet on the stairs, a lift, a back staircase, and other signs of opulence and luxury. It was living on the fifth (really the seventh in this case), but of course called the fifth (you manage it by slipping in an entresol and other things of that kind between the

ground and the first floor), which made the Americans think they were "roughing it" so completely.

"Our little flat in the clouds," they called it, "and so small."

The flat had a dining-room, which took a table where ten or twelve people could have dined comfortably, a drawing-room, all windows, mirrors, and moulding with a painted ceiling, a study, lots of parquet passages, three bedrooms, servants' quarters, and a kitchen. We were taken to admire the economy of the fitting and the bargains in the furniture.

"Only camping out here," said young Mr. Boston good-humouredly as we sat down to dinner. "Just enough chairs to go round. You must take us as we are."

"Isn't this Breton ware cute?" said his wife, passing a blue-patterned fleur de lis meat plate, "and so cheap" (1s. 6d. each, I knew them). "I thought it such a good bargain, and then it doesn't matter if they do get broken."

Both these young people talked English with only the faintest accent and very little special vocabulary. I agreed.

We had had "soupe à la crème" and were eating a "pâté."

"I just revel in these provision stores," she went on. "Potin sells such good things. Don't you find it easy housekeeping?"

"You mean easy housekeeping to go and buy pâté?" I said.

She nodded. "Have some more foie gras, now do? Or try the other thing. Europe's so cheap. I do marvel at the prices. At home now we should pay five times as much, and foie gras would be a luxury. Here one can run up a dinner without any trouble."

The foie gras made way for an immense dish of mushrooms besides other vegetables at her end of the table, while a turkey with all the traditional "fixings" was

put on at the other. The cranberry jelly had been specially sent "from home."

"It would seem so lonely to eat turkey without," as Mrs. Boston said.

We had been drinking red wine up to now, red wine with a label not "vin ordinaire," but when the turkey was carried in young Mr. Boston got up and promptly a champagne cork popped loudly.

"It's so cheap," said Mrs. Boston, taking an appreciative sip, "so cheap over here. I tell Franklin we must profit by it while we are in France, or what's the use of coming to Europe?"

"We pay ten dollars a bottle at home, and not half as good as this," said Franklin. "I suppose in England it's almost as cheap as it is here?"

"Not quite," said Richard, smiling.

"Ten dollars," said Mrs. Boston, doing arithmetic in her head, "that's . . . that's fifty francs . . . and this cost . . . then," joyfully interrupting herself, "Franklin, we've saved about forty francs to-night on the champagne alone."

Richard caught my eye across the table and we smiled. But Franklin opened another bottle in order to save a second forty francs as quickly as possible, and his wife looked as though she had banked the money.

After the turkey we had expensive salads, after the salads expensive sweets, after the sweets expensive cheeses, after the cheese expensive fruit, after the fruit quantities of marrons glacés, chocolates, fondants, and other confectionery, and all because they were "so cheap."

Mrs. Boston took a silver dish of sweets in each hand when she and I at last sought the gilded, mirrored salon. Here she ate marrons glacés and chocolates until the dishes were empty and the coffee arrived.

I thought of the "Bonnes Bouches" in the window

of the shop in the rue Bréa and ate five beauties, large luscious chocolates that melted in your mouth in an ineffable flavour of scented creamlike sweetness; but I ate no more, and watched Mrs. Boston popping chocolate after marron glacé and marron glacé after chocolate into her mouth until they were all gone. I had had enough and a vague feeling which I couldn't explain would have stopped me if I hadn't.

Mrs. Boston moved over to the fireplace to settle herself in a different chair, her coffee cup in her hand. In sitting down she spilt a long trail of coffee all down the front of her obviously new, and very handsome, mauve, moiré frock. The coffee meandered slowly to the bottom and after the first shock she sat still and watched it.

"How did it happen?" I said sympathetically. "And coffee stains are so hard to get out. I'm so sorry."

But Mrs. Boston looked up at me, radiant.

"Now I can get a new frock," she said. "This was one of my trousseau gowns. It seemed real elegant out home, but I find it's only a back number over here. They're wearing. . . ."

And she talked fashions until our husbands arrived. Franklin, I found, had been telling Richard about his medical classes, and how it would take him four years at least to get his degree here and not the two or three he had imagined "out home," because the authorities were making him begin from the beginning again, refusing to let any of his previous work count; but as he liked Paris and didn't mind "camping out" it seemed a beneficial arrangement for keeping him there.

His wife between mouthfuls of marron glacé had talked to me of the studio which she already thought of giving up for private lessons; and she was going to do a large portrait of Franklin for the salon. It might interfere with his classes a little because light was short in

winter, and she would have to have him to sit in the morning—but he could soon make that up, and they were there for four years anyway, so a little more wouldn't matter. Paris was so fascinating, wasn't it?

And I sat and looked at her in the handsome, new, mauve dress with its meandering stain of coffee down the front, so young, and fresh, and happy, and handsome, and at Franklin in the background, young too, happy too, so fresh and handsome; and I thought of Paris wrapping us all around. I could see ourselves as it were from the outside, and the soft drawl of that other American came back to me:

“But the rest Paris sends . . .”

Then for the first time a quality of fear came into that charm, of fear for ourselves. It passed in the space of a breath long-drawn, but it had been.

“Draw up to the fire,” said Mrs. Boston, “you're cold. Franklin, did you bring the cigars with you?”

VII

The pivot of cubbyhouse life was undoubtedly the big cooks twice a week, without them life as we lived it would have been impossible. By dedicating two evenings a week with their five hours of solid cooking I got in return comparative freedom for five days and a stocked pantry. Five days a lady at large, two evenings a week a cook in the kitchen, and I learnt very exhaustively the lesson that leisure doesn't descend from on high a free gift, but has to be paid for always, paid for by some one somehow. In the cubbyhouse as I paid for it myself, and only got it when paid for, I could make no mistake about the matter. When one gets it at two or three removes the connection is more difficult to trace.

At five o'clock then, or a little before, I rose up and went into the kitchen. The process of lighting my kitchen stove was pretty much the same as that of the one in the Pentagon: paper, wood, charcoal, coal. When I had dropped the lumps of coal on to the burning charcoal I shut up the top by putting on the kettle, and in twenty minutes it was boiling, the fire fierce, the oven hot, the whole stove ready for operations. Meanwhile I put cold water over any bones I possessed and stood the saucepan to heat, ground coffee, and scraped vegetables. Once the kettle boiling, it was removed to the extreme side and I made coffee leisurely as it should be made, putting it through three or four or as many times as could be managed between beginning dinner and serving it. It was making for about two hours and was exceedingly good, and I knew that the coffee grounds had given up all the flavour they possessed.

As there was only room for me and the stove and one pail to strain vegetables into, all my cooking tools hung on the wall, even to knives and wooden spoons. There was only one small shelf. By sewing together lengths of webbing and nailing them at frequent intervals to the wall I had got a series of little pockets into which small things could be slipped. The lamp was hung by a nail through its handle, and salt, and pepper, and flour, and such things were all in little wooden boxes with lids which hung in a row beside the fire. There was nowhere to put anything down on except the stove. And by scorching a great number of my belongings I learnt at last, what I was continually forgetting (it looked so black), that the stove was hot. Things that wouldn't hang on the walls had to be kept in the first room, and everything that wasn't actually cooking, such as preparing vegetables, had to be done there. And all the stores that couldn't be hung or would injure in the heat, such as butter, had to be kept there too. This was a nuisance,

because butter plays a prominent part in French cooking, and I was perpetually moving backwards and forwards with bits of butter balanced on a knife, but it couldn't be helped, the kitchen got far too hot after the first half hour to allow butter to keep butter, and long before dinner time it was with difficulty that I was kept from melting too.

My kitchen had a small skylight which let in a little air, but it also let in all the rain and a good deal of dirt, so that it was a nice problem to decide whether to have it shut or open. In summer I was sometimes reduced to cooking in very airy attire, and a sudden knock at the door would send me flying into the Pentagon, where I listened to Richard opening the door and to fatal noises of boiling over or burning which reduced me to despair.

At any time when cooking in the kitchen it was somewhat difficult to open the front door, because anybody who didn't stand rigorously in the passage was almost precipitated on to the stove, and the sudden draught wafted the incense of burnt meat offerings or boiled vegetable ones beneath their nostrils. It only had one advantage. On the rare days when the stove wouldn't draw, I propped the front door open and the draught made the fire burn; but I might as well have cooked on the staircase, so it could not be kept open long. At least, I thought it couldn't, for fear of complaint from the concierge, though as a matter of taste Richard always kept the door of the Pentagon opened. He said the delicious scents that came from the kitchen were something more than just appetising, they were aesthetic treats and he wasn't going to miss them. But I strongly suspected another and more material motive. It came about this way.

I constituted Richard taster-in-chief. I couldn't learn to salt and pepper and sugar and flavour generally all at once without continual tasting (a French cook

considers herself a failure if any but abnormal people take extra salt, sugar, etc.), and if one tastes too often one doesn't taste at all, besides which when dinner time comes appetite has vanished, so after having got a thing up to nearly right point, I took to running hastily in to Richard with a teaspoon and a "Has this got quite enough salt?": or "Do you think it wants just a little more sugar?": or "Would some lemon or thyme or herbs improve this?" And Richard duly tasted and criticised and pronounced.

After a while I noticed there came a certain indecision in his judgment, a hesitancy. He "wasn't quite sure." It was "a little difficult to say." He "couldn't quite tell, perhaps . . . no . . . Could he have a little more to taste first? "

So he got another spoonful. And then, purely to save me the trouble of coming into the Pentagon, he would himself appear in the doorway of the kitchen armed with a tablespoon and an inquiry whether "anything wanted tasting? "

It was then I found that ragouts with mushrooms (the little round button mushrooms grown artificially in the catacombs of Paris and sold all the year round at from 6*d.* to 10*d.* a pound) always needed two or more large tablespoonfuls before a properly considered judgment could be pronounced. Richard adored mushrooms. So I sort of suspected that the aesthetic delight in "delicious smells " was not the only reason for the open door of the Pentagon.

At first, on Wednesdays and Saturdays at crucial points in the cooking I would fly down the three stories to Madame Weisman to implore her to solve my difficulties, which she always did. And she always knew exactly how long everything under the sun would require to cook just by looking at it. When I grew ambitious I bought a fat cookery book (half price at a sale) called

La Bonne Ménagère and experimented in its less expensive recipes. Some of them turned out delicious, and proud indeed was I when madame herself, after tasting critically, would declare it "très bien," and as she didn't "know that way, how was it done?"

La Bonne Ménagère was responsible too for some of my most desperate failures. No, not directly, but because in the quiet intervals of cooking, while waiting for something to boil or to heat or to be ready, I would take her down to read and get so absorbed in the way to cook impossible delicacies which wanted, say, thirteen eggs or a sauce composed principally of cream, or requiring a double steamer to cook it in, that the humble joint in the oven (1½ lb. of filet of beef) would be burnt before I knew it.

Another volume which belonged to my cooking library was Brillat Savarin. I found him coverless on the quays for twopence and brought him home to read. The queer mixture of cookery, philosophy, psychology, "gauloiserie," and French wit interested me greatly, and in the off times of cooking, the sort of times when one reads advertisements gladly, I got all through Brillat Savarin and enjoyed him. At such times too I studied my *Bonne Ménagère* until I knew, in theory anyway, all the recipes of which she was composed.

Sometimes vaulting ambition would lead me to attempt too much, and as my stove would only boil two saucepans properly all the time and keep a small one on the edge, held on, in a state of gentle simmer, and even that with difficulty and much stoking, if I had embarked on a menu which necessitated four saucepans I got reduced to playing a perpetual General Post with them, to try by constant juggling to keep, not the pot, but the four pots boiling. It was never successful. My other great crime was to miscalculate my time and eight o'clock, even half-past eight, would sometimes find me hot, tired, but

still "not quite ready," cooking in the kitchen. On such occasions I usually fell asleep after the first mouthful and Richard was left at the feast alone.

There really was a good deal to do, for half a week's cooking, even for two people, isn't like one meal, and all the extra vegetables and things required for "déjeuners" had to be finished off first before the dinner, which was either three dinners or four dinners, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, or Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays, could be taken in hand. In fact it was really cooking a whole dinner for six or eight people, besides parts of lunches for the same number.

And this is the sort of thing I would have to get through (I give the swell ones):

Make coffee.

Bake mackerel.

Make tomato soup.

Cook turnips and afterwards mash them and "sauté" them in gravy.

Cook celery.

Make a white sauce.

No, *not* melted butter, but a delicious and more troublesome sauce made also of flour and butter and milk. In this the sauce boils and has to be stirred and kept boiling for fifteen minutes.

Stew prunes in red wine.

Roast mutton, already stuffed with herbs and salt.

Or to take another little list:

Make coffee.

Make pumpkin soup (boil in water, strain, mash, flavour, boil in milk).

Cook French beans.

Cook potatoes, mash them, and afterwards make into a purée.

This requires butter, milk, and ten minutes' perpetual stirring after the compound bubbles.

Roast wing of goose.

Make apple sauce.

Stew onions (after parboiling) in a gravy sauce made from stock which also requires stirring for ten minutes after boiling, and one hour's cooking.

Make pumpkin soup.

Stew prunes.

Or try this:

Make coffee.

Make a soup from goose bones and vegetables.

Rabbit sauté which is an excellent and elaborate way of stewing rabbit, requiring—

1st, frying of onions.

2nd, frying of rabbit.

3rd, making of a thick gravy sauce, stirring for ten minutes at least.

4th, peeling of mushrooms.

5th, chopping up and frying of lard (bacon fat).

Lastly, the whole to be gently simmered for at least two hours.

Stir in red wine and beat up the liver to a thick sauce and add ten minutes before serving.

Cook rice.

Boil egg plants. Stuff with chopped scraps of goose and parsley and lightly "sauté" with butter.

These cooks worked out in menus this way:

WEDNESDAY DÉJEUNER

Plat du jour

Omelette aux fines herbes

Entremets

Salad mâche

Dessert

Cheese. Grapes

Coffee.

WEDNESDAY DINNER

Plat du jour

Roast mutton with mashed turnips

Entremets

Celery with white sauce

Dessert

Cheese, petit Suisse

Fruit, grapes

Black coffee.

THURSDAY DÉJEUNER

Plat du jour

Baked mackerel

Entremets

Stuffed tomatoes

Dessert

Cheese, Roquefort

Fruit, grapes

Coffee.

THURSDAY DINNER

Potage

Tomato soup

Plat du jour

Roast mutton heated in mashed turnips

Entremets

Celery with white sauce

Dessert

Cheese, Roquefort

Fruit, stewed prunes

Coffee.

FRIDAY DÉJEUNER

Plat du jour

Baked mackerel

Entremets

Stuffed tomatoes au gratin

Dessert

Cheese, Roquefort

Fruit, grapes

Coffee.

FRIDAY DINNER

Potage

Tomato soup

Plat du jour

Sliced mutton with celery and white sauce

Entremets

Stuffed tomatoes au gratin

Dessert

Cheese, Roquefort

Fruit, stewed prunes

Coffee.

SATURDAY DÉJEUNER

Omelette aux fines herbes

Entremets

Lettuce salad

Dessert

Cheese. Grapes

Coffee.

SATURDAY DINNER

Potage

Tomato soup

Plat du jour

Roast goose with apple sauce

Stewed onions, sauce béarnaise

Potato purée

Entremets

Lettuce salad

Dessert

Cheese. Grapes

Coffee.

SUNDAY DÉJEUNER

Potage

Pumpkin soup

Plat du jour

Macaroni au gratin

Entremets

French beans au beurre

Dessert

Cheese. Grapes

Coffee.

SUNDAY DINNER

Potage

Pumpkin soup

Plat du jour

Goose (cold) with apple sauce

Potato purée

Onions à la sauce béarnaise

Dessert

Cheese. Grapes

Coffee.

MONDAY DÉJEUNER

Potage

Pumpkin soup

Plat du jour

Macaroni au gratin

Entremets

French beans au jus (heated in gravy)

Dessert

Cheese. Stewed prunes

Coffee.

MONDAY DINNER

Potage

Pumpkin soup

Plat du jour

Roast goose with apple sauce

Onions, sauce béarnaise

Potato purée

Entremets

Tomatoes au gratin

Dessert

Cheese. Grapes

Coffee.

TUESDAY DÉJEUNER

Potage

Pumpkin soup

Plat du jour

Nouilles aux œufs

Entremets

French beans sautés

Dessert

Cheese. Stewed prunes

Coffee.

TUESDAY DINNER

Entrée

Nouilles aux tomates

Plat du jour

Roast goose and apple sauce

Potatoes en robe de chambre

Entremets

Tomatoes au gratin

Dessert

Cheese. Stewed prunes

Coffee.

WEDNESDAY DÉJEUNER

Plat du jour

Omelette aux tomates

Entremets

Lettuce salad

Dessert

Cheese. Ripe figs

Coffee.

WEDNESDAY DINNER

Plat du jour

Rabbit sauté with rice

Entremets

Egg plants stuffed

Dessert

Cheese. Ripe figs

Coffee.

THURSDAY DÉJEUNER

Potage

Goose soup with vegetables

Plat du jour

Watercress salad with eggs and cheese

Entremets

Egg plants stuffed

Dessert

Cheese. Ripe figs

Coffee.

THURSDAY DINNER

Potage

Goose soup with vegetables

Plat du jour

Rabbit sauté with rice

Entremets

Egg plants stuffed

Dessert

Cheese. Plums

Coffee.

FRIDAY DÉJEUNER (out of doors)

Egg sandwiches with tomatoes

Cheese sandwiches

Apricot jam sandwiches

Plums.

FRIDAY DINNER

Potage

Goose soup

Plat du jour

Rabbit sauté with rice

Entremets

Watercress salad

Dessert

Cheese. Plums

Coffee.

100 PARIS THROUGH AN ATTIC

And the price worked out this way. Starting with the first menus on Wednesday I bought at the market:

	frs. c.
Mutton ($1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of leg, top part, cut slightly differently to the English leg, called <i>selle</i>)	1.50
1 bunch turnips	20
2 sticks of celery	20
1 kilo (2 lb., a kilo is a little over 2 lb.) tomatoes	20
6 eggs	60
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. butter	75
Cheese, petit Suisse	25
„ Roquefort	20
„ grated cheese	15
1 kilo prunes	45
1 kilo grapes	40
	4.90

About $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of the butter was used for cooking purposes, the rest at tea time.

The next big cook provided for four days and included goose, a great treat:

	frs. c.
Goose, wing at 80 the $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo	2.30
Onions	10
Salad	05
Potatoes	20
French beans, $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo	35
Apples, 1 kilo	25
Grapes	30
6 eggs	60
Butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	75
Tomatoes, 1 kilo	20
Pumpkin, 1 slice	10
	5.30
and subsequently grated cheese	15
	5.45

WORKING THE CUBBYHOUSE 101

Cheese and prunes were not bought, enough being left over from the last marketing, but macaroni and nouilles have to be added. Nouilles is a kind of very thin macaroni, flat and without a hole. It is prepared in France with eggs and sold in boxes at $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ each.

	frs. c.
I should reckon it at	15
and macaroni certainly didn't cost more than .	05
	20
Add	5'45
Grand total	5'65

For the next three days I bought at the market:

	frs. c.
Rabbit at 80 the $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo	1'35
Lard (fat bacon)	15
Mushrooms, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	20
Egg plants	20
6 eggs	60
Cheese	30
1 bunch of watercress	05
1 lettuce	05
1 lb. ripe figs	40
1 kilo plums	35
Butter (less than the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.)	50
Onions	05
Pot au feu (bunch of mixed vegetables for the soup).	10
	4'30
And rice. We used perhaps	10
	4'40

We now have ten days' food, lunches, and dinners, but to the prices of these there is still to be added that of bread, wine, sugar, coffee, and the small extras used in cooking. There was also the cost of breakfasts and teas.

Of bread in ten days we used altogether nine loaves.

	frs. c.
9 loaves at 35 c.	3.05
Wine, 10 litre bottles at 80 c. ¹	8.00
Milk, 30 c. a day (milk cost 40 c. a litre)	3.00
Coffee, 1 kilo in six weeks at 2.50 the kilo	60
Chocolate, 1 kilo in six weeks at 3.50 the kilo	85
Sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo in about twelve days at 60 the $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo	50
Tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. a month sent from England, carriage included	65
	16.65

The small extras, such as salt, pepper, flour, etc., used in cooking are amply allowed for in these averages which are all taken on the top side.

	frs. c.
Add	16.65
	4.90
	5.65
	4.40
	31.60

Which sum divided by 10 gives a cost of 3.16 fr. or a fraction less than 1s. 3d. per day per person, and brought our food bill to 1153.40 frs. a year, that is to £46 os. 5½d. Now as a matter of fact it came out to less, I will explain why later.

	frs. c.
Of coal in the four winter months we used for cooking and heating	20.40
In the summer for cooking only in three months	2.50

And this was coal at a price of 52s. 0d. a ton.

We had to buy it by the half sack of 25 kilos, costing 1.60 fr. the half sack.

¹ With regard to this item we were living in a wine-drinking country, and both of us were firmly under the prejudice at that time that one could not drink water in Paris and live. Any other form of drink was equally expensive.

Of methylated spirit in these summer months we used 3.20 frs. compared with 2.60 frs. in the winter months. But of paraffin oil the consumption was practically the same winter and summer. In the four winter months, when it was used almost entirely for light, we bought 24.05 frs. worth at 3.60 the "bidon" (5 litres): it varied a little in price. In the three summer months when it was used for both lighting and cooking we still used 21.50 frs. worth. Remember too that Richard always sat up late working.

Now we will make our budget and you will see why food cost less than £46 os. 5½d.

First:

	frs. c.
Rent, fixed and unsqueezable	320.00
Concierge, likewise fixed and unsqueezable, but politely called Etrennes (Christmas box)	10.00
Tax for having the gutters cleaned, likewise fixed and unsqueezable	1.95
Coal with wood and braise (charcoal) about ¼ ton in the year	35.15
Oil	62.50
Methylated	6.10
2 matriculation fees } Fixed and unsqueezable {	40.00
2 Sorbonne library fees } {	20.00
Laundry (after squeezing to its limit)	102.65

That is £23 19s. 1d.

598.35

Now let us do a simple sum in subtraction:

	£	s.	d.
Income per year	70	0	0
Expenditure (unsqueezable, or already squeezed to limit):			
Rent			
Fuel			
Light			
Laundry			
University fees			
Leaving	46	0	11

If we had spent therefore £46 os. 5½*d.* on food we should have had just 5½*d.* left for trams, postage, paper, ink, pencils, boot-mending, and every other extra in which we indulged. Manifestly this was impossible. *So when we wanted money for anything instead of drawing it out of the bank we took it out of the food.* I put this sentence in italics that its importance may be appreciated. We never took it out of necessities, only out of luxuries. For instance, we used an average of ½ lb. of butter a week at tea time, that is 75 c. Well, honey cost much less and went further, and we both of us, but I most, wanted a certain plaque which cost two francs. So I worked out carefully that if we had honey on our bread instead of butter every day at tea time for five weeks we should get our two francs. We both of us liked honey and started gaily on the experiment. At the end of the first week we had to temper our honey with bread and butter on Sundays. In the middle of the third week Richard gave in. He simply couldn't manage honey any more, so I was left to eat honey for, not only the original five weeks, but for his lost two and a half, as well as the added Sundays, which made two solid months of honey. I stuck to it and bought the plaque (which I have still), but it was six years before either of us could eat honey again.

Therefore before I started off to market I had to consider what else we wanted to do besides eat dinners and market accordingly. One thing always had to pay for another. When we went to the theatre (50 c. each, gallery) we didn't dine off goose. We ate stewed veal with haricot beans or we watered—this came first—watered our wine to pinkness.

I had certain stock menus which were much cheaper than others, and stewed veal with onions and haricot beans or with tomatoes and macaroni was one of them. This cost:

						frs. c.
Veal	.	.	.	.	.	1'30
Onions	.	.	.	.	.	05
Tomatoes	.	.	.	.	.	10
Macaroni	.	.	.	.	.	10

 1'55

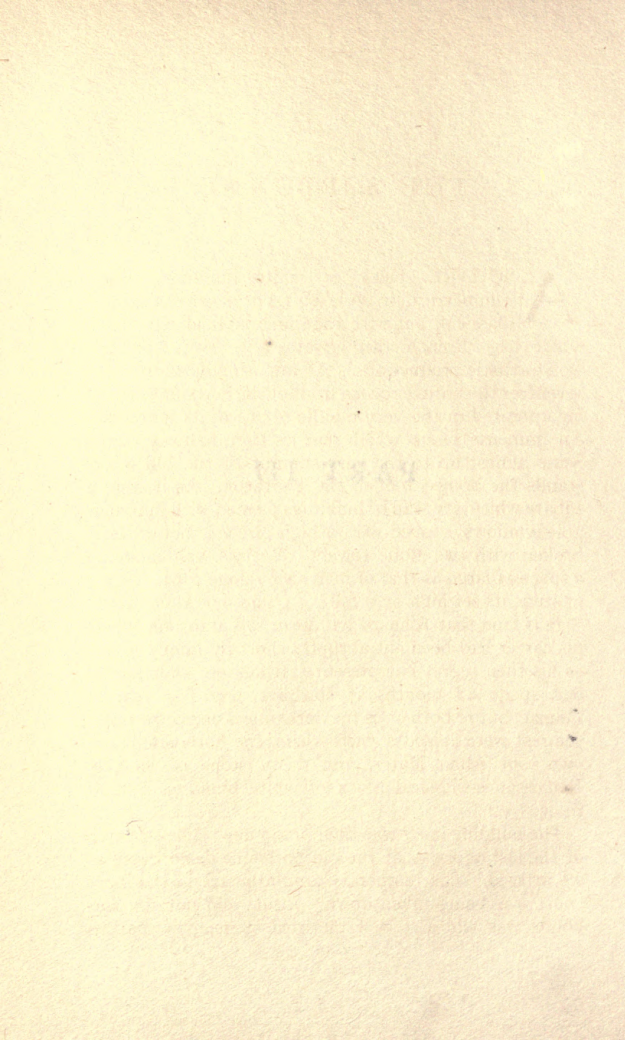
and lasted four days. What was cheaper still were herrings, which become delicacies when done in the oven in a little white wine, eaten with rice; or cooked and served as a salad with chopped potatoes or haricot beans. Then there was macaroni cheese, where 1*d.* worth of macaroni and 15 c. worth of grated cheese provided the staple of two people's two dinners.

So you see we had a bank to draw on, provided we didn't draw too often and were careful how we drew.

And we didn't. After the necessities of boot-mending, the largest item (brown paper is quite a good temporary substitute; if you can get a scrap of old mackintosh that is very lasting and effective), notebooks, paper, stamps, cotton, etc., had been provided, there remained only our pleasures, and these cost us very little. Paris itself was our greatest pleasure, and so much of it, most of what we cared for best, was there for us to take free of charge. We took it freely, made Paris our own, so that it passed into our hearts and brains, and stays there still.

Now you know how the cubbyhouse was made and how it was run, and how it was made and run inside the iron frame of its budget.

PART III



THE SORBONNE

I

A SQUARE block of white buildings, huge, symmetrical, in style a kind of neo-Renaissance-Classical, but with the indefinable artistic finish which the French can always give even to their worst artistic productions. An imposing block with the seventeenth-century rococo front of the Sorbonne church incorporated in the very middle of one of its four sides. An immense block which reaches from halfway to the Seine almost up to the very summit of the hill where stands the domed roof of the Panthéon. As it were a square white city wall of buildings pierced with innumerable windows, topped with a high-pitched roof of slate, broken with two stone towers. A city's wall enclosing a space as large as that of many a by-gone town. A city of students set high on a hill . . . and our Alma Mater.

It is true that Richard had been to Cambridge where his career had been cut abruptly short by family losses, to his then regret but present satisfaction, and that he had spent six months at Marburg, and I a year at Leipzig, but to both of us the Sorbonne is our University; the rest were episodes, mere visits, the Sorbonne is our own, our Alma Mater, and every stone of its neo-Renaissance-Classical block of white buildings is dear to us.

The building itself was then brand new. The last arch of the last doorway of the old Sorbonne disappeared as we arrived. The temporary amphitheatre in the inner court was being taken down. Inside and out the Sorbonne was white as new quarried stone, new marble,

new plaster, could make it. It was but little older than the new University of Paris in which it had been incorporated; and stood the symbol of the new century, the re-embodied spirit of the past high on its hill.

Seven centuries old, reborn yesterday, the Sorbonne, but part now of the new University of Paris, still keeps its name, for custom clings. Students of letters or of law are still students of the Sorbonne. Professors still profess "en Sorbonne." We are all still students of one mother, "La Sorbonne." Even the building itself is "La Nouvelle Sorbonne." And yet as an entity the Sorbonne does not exist. There is a Faculty of Letters, a Faculty of Science, an *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, an *École Nationale des Chartes*, all housed in the Nouvelle Sorbonne; a Faculty of Law, a Faculty of Medicine, an *École Supérieure de Pharmacie*, an *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts*, a *Collège de France*, a School of the Louvre, a special school of living Oriental languages, an *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, a Museum of Natural History, all with buildings of their own; there is an observatory at Nice, three sea laboratories in Brittany, Flanders, and Provence, even a laboratory of "physiologie végétale" at Fontainebleau; the new-born University of Paris is made up of all of these, but there is no Sorbonne.

For the University of Paris is a confederation of many different parts and faculties, each of which could and many did exist without the University, while the University has no being save through its parts. It does not even own the material lodgments of some of its faculties. The buildings of the Faculty of Law, for instance, of the Faculty of Medicine, of even the Nouvelle Sorbonne are municipal buildings: they belong to the City of Paris. For Paris, which has so pre-eminently the French instinct for the magnificent, has with the state borne the entire cost of all these buildings. It has also endowed several

professorial chairs. And now the University bears the city's name and is of Paris in deed as well as word.

So the City on the Hill which for seven centuries has looked down upon the town, fought it, ignored it, quarrelled with it, now belongs to it. Paris growing up the hill has grown beyond it. Paris growing with the centuries has grown all round it, has absorbed it. And the Sorbonne which once taught all knowledge in teaching theology, and was above and separate from the city and the state, now teaches no theology though it strives to teach all knowledge and belongs to town and state.

And the city and the state are generous and magnificent in their conception of their part. The enormous mass of the Nouvelle Sorbonne stands to-day their work. This white mass of building whose walls enclose a space as large as many a hilltop town, whose doors are of wrought iron, whose vestibule is of marble, whose grand staircase is of cunning metal work and delicate marble mosaic, whose amphitheatre of ceremony is all glorious with frescoes and carving—in these the city has given of its best without stint.

There is, too, a certain largeness in its planning which is the mark of France. The vestibule, the "Salle des Pas Perdus," runs full half the length of the long frontage on the rue des Écoles, where is the principal entrance to the building, and the wrought metal gates, picked out in gold, of the Grand Escalier, stand in the centre; on either side are long marble corridors whose distant ends are in the inner court, while above, high up on the far wall, the panelled balustrade of a hidden stairway hangs like a balcony above the hall. The stairway leads to classrooms and to administrative offices. And the corridors lead to classrooms too, bare flat rooms with large windows, filled with rows of black schoolroom desks; and to amphitheatres, elegant halls, panelled and carved, with painted ceilings and solid splendid decoration, and a

floor gently sloping upward from the professorial desk behind its oaken barrier—amphitheatres which sometimes have no windows in their walls and are always quiet and retired, and sombrely rich like a great man's library.

The inner court is large and spacious and has the north front of the Sorbonne church for one of its four sides, an entrance in the rue Victor Cousin almost opposite the Place de la Sorbonne, and an arcade on the three secular sides of it.

The walls of the arcade are covered with frescoes, and a flight of shallow steps, a terrace of marble slabs, leads up to the columned porch of the church.

The church itself is incorporated into the huge rectangular mass of the buildings at its centre point and divides it almost exactly into halves. On one side letters in the largest meaning of that word, and classrooms, amphitheatres, grand amphitheatre, council halls, secrétariat, University Library. On the other science and a wilderness of laboratories. A right theology must still hold all knowledge in its lap, be still the centre of the sciences. So the Sorbonne church stands emblematic.

In the Salle des Pas Perdus, the "Hall of the Lost Footsteps," as the French call it in a haunting phrase, is the "loge" of the concierge. The two long corridors either side the Grand Amphithéâtre are the "Galerie des Lettres" and the "Galerie des Sciences." The classrooms are named after the letters of the alphabet, the amphitheatres after the great men of France whose lives or whose works have touched the University: amphithéâtre Richelieu, for Richelieu built the old Sorbonne pulled down to make this new one; amphithéâtre Guizot, for Guizot was one of the first after the troublous times of the Revolution and the first Empire (the nadir of the Sorbonne by decree in a state of suspended anima-

tion) to fix attention on the University by the wide popularity of his lectures (he used it, indeed, with much address as a political pulpit); and amphithéâtres Descartes, Turgot, Michelet, etc.

For government this city on a hill has a University Council on which all the faculties as also the state are represented, and for administration it has the vice-rector—the Minister of Public Instruction being by virtue of his office the Rector of the University—and on all questions concerning the University as on many others concerning higher education the council administers, deliberates, and makes recommendations. Over matters of internal administration it has complete control.

Each faculty has its own dean, the doyen of its professors, at its head. And each faculty has its own examinations and degrees, but in the main these are three: the licence taken after at least a two years' course of study; the agrégation, a civil service examination for the teaching profession, usually taken after the licence; and the doctorat, an entirely post-graduate examination often taken ten or more years after the licence. The doctor's degree, which has both state privileges and state duties, means the presentation of a long thesis, a book running into 300, 500, 700 pages, the public defence of this thesis, not indeed as of old in the days of Dante and Abelard against all comers, but against the Sorbonne's chosen professors, a defence which lasts from eight in the morning to twelve, two, four, or later in the afternoon. It means also an oral examination on collateral subjects; and, by direct descent from the Middle Ages, and to keep up the old tradition, it meant the presentation of a thesis in Latin. This Latin thesis was purely mechanical and perfunctory (they could, in fact, be bought ready-made in any of the booksellers' shops of the quarter), but it existed a mere survival of

the past up to a few years ago. Quite recently it has been replaced by a short *mémoire*, or critique written in French or in some other modern language.

It will be seen that the French doctorat is no light thing. A modified form of use to foreign students, necessitating no previous French degree, and carrying with it none of the privileges or obligations of the state degree, is the "Doctorat de l'Université de Paris." From the first this degree omitted the Latin thesis, and it allows the native language of the candidate to be offered as one of the collateral subjects.

Besides these three main degrees which have grown up with the University, there are "Certificats d'Études" in all branches, coming generally after licence work; "Certificats d'Aptitude" likewise which can be taken without previous examination; there are also diplomas and scholarship (*bourse*) examinations; and lately, to accommodate the large and ever-growing body of the foreign students, a form of licence examination which has discarded the otherwise obligatory Greek and Latin and allows the native language of the student to be offered instead. In my day this had unfortunately not been introduced and for want of a little Greek I could not take my licence.

Both the licence and the *agrégation* are divided up into many different sides. For example, the "Licence ès Lettres" has a licence in literature pure and simple: this is called "Licence ès lettres mention Littéraire." But you can also have it with a "mention historique," or "philosophique," or "classique," or with "mention langues vivantes." This gives the student ample scope to follow his own bent. Each must have something of the other, but each specialises in its own "mention." Inside the faculty the various "mentions" have a very varying popularity. In my time the "mention littéraire" was easily first and philosophy and

modern languages last, but the changing political situation and other influences have enormously increased the students of modern languages, while the cult of M. Bergson has brought philosophy to almost the second place.

Entrance to the University is through the "Baccalauréat," so the title of Bachelier, once of some importance, is now practically extinct. It is merely the mark of matriculation and not an equivalent to our B.A. degree. Foreign students are not required to pass the Baccalauréat, but must present an equivalent. And in the matter of judging equivalents the Conseil de l'Université alone decides. It rarely errs on the side of severity, and strange things do happen sometimes. How should a committee of French professors know the ins and outs of our educational system or want of system? Or the exact value of an American backwoods "college"? I have even known the magic words "University Extension Course," which in this case meant the paying for twelve lectures on Tennyson, to pass as an equivalent.

The generosity of the University is extraordinary, for the French feel that certain things befit a great nation, and a large and generous way of dealing with knowledge, a way absolutely removed from any trace of huckstering, is one of them. Written up over many a national monument in France, in museums, picture galleries, historic castles, are the words "A la gloire de la France" (For the glory, or renown, of France), and for the glory of France many things must be done, not the least of them the upkeep of a great University.

The population of this hilltop city is many thousands and is always growing; 14,000 in my time, nearly 17,000 in 1907, still more to-day, so many more that this immense block of buildings raised so short a time ago and planned then for the future is hard put to it sometimes to hold them all. For of this immense population of university

students over 3000 of them are students of the Sorbonne alone, while the Faculty of Law had in 1907 over 7000 students, the Faculty of Medicine over 3000, and the Faculty of Science over 2000. And among this multitude of students, all of whom are duly inscribed upon the books of the University, no less than 2300 were foreigners. They came from all parts of the world. From Persia, China, Japan, Turkey, Greece, Portugal, Hungary, Rumania (a large contingent more than from anywhere else except Russia, Rumania having always sent many students to Paris), from Bulgaria, Servia, Norway, Tunis, Egypt, Brazil, Mexico, from Canada and Haiti, from the republics of Central America and from the republics of Southern America, from Denmark, from Austria, from Spain, from Italy, Holland, Sweden, Belgium, from Switzerland, Germany, the British Isles, from the African islands, from the Antilles, from Siam, the interior of Africa, the United States of America, and they come, more than a thousand of them, from Russia. The University of Paris is open to all the world and all the world meets there to study there, as it meets to study nowhere else.

This University of Paris, open to all the world, is open too to all the human beings in it. It makes no distinction of sex. Where African and Aryan stand on equal terms men and women too stand equally. There is neither in theory nor in practice the smallest administrative difference between them. Nor in my experience any actual difference of treatment by either professors or students. In *Cours fermés* (students' lectures) I have frequently been the only woman student present, and it hasn't made the slightest perceptible difference to any one concerned. More even than that, no one seemed conscious of it. This is the consummation to be wished devoutly everywhere, but as yet so rarely reached.

In the whole University of Paris there were in 1907

1320 women students of whom 829 were foreigners, and they were divided between the faculties as follows:

108 law students, with 30 French and 78 foreigners.

246 medicals, 73 French, 173 foreigners, largely Russian.

At the Faculty of Science 242, with 89 French and 153 foreigners.

At the School of Chemists 4, all foreigners.

At the Faculty of Letters 719, with 298 French and 421 foreigners.

So that in every faculty the number of foreign women students outnumbers the French. This is an enormous increase since my time, especially in the *Faculté des Lettres*. The largest body of women students then was at the *Faculté de Médecine*, and those at the *Faculté de Droit* (Law) were practically non-existent. The bulk of the French women students then were studying for the various teaching certificates or for the *agrégation*, few for ordinary degree work. To a great extent this is still true, for the necessity of Greek in the licence examination acted almost as a sex barrier, French girls learning Greek quite as little as English ones.

Fourteen thousand students, seventeen thousand, even more. It is indeed the population of a city, more even than the population of many a hilltop city of the past. Even the 3000 students of the Faculty of Letters is a respectable population for the high white walls of the "Nouvelle Sorbonne" to enclose.

But besides the population of students there is also the population of professors. These number, all told, laboratory demonstrators and assistants, with heads of clinics and heads of "*travaux pratiques*," 628, of whom 320 are duly and properly appointed teaching professors. The *Faculté des Lettres* alone has 78 of them. The School of Medicine needs 108. Law takes 43. Science 64. The School of Chemists 32.

It is astonishing to us, who think of a chemist as a mere tradesman, a patent drug and scented soap purveyor, to realise that in France a chemist belongs to the learned professions, and that a whole university faculty is given up to teaching and training him; besides a large garden in the very heart of Paris to growing and practically demonstrating the medicinal values of plants. In French provincial towns the chemist has a distinguished place. He is often the best known man of the district. He alone of those who keep shops has relations with all its inhabitants, from the peasant in his holding to the prefect in his prefecture, the commandant at the garrison, even to the plutocrat or the aristocrat at the château. And his shop, set out usually with the severity of a consultant's reception room, is often the one club of the place. Its position is its own and he and it pre-eminently French.

Among the 320 teaching professors duly and properly appointed the University distinguishes three grades. There are first the "professeurs titulaires" appointed by solemn decree of the "Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique" who are permanent and irremovable. They are the aristocracy among the professors. Then come the "professeurs chargés de cours," permanent but removable; and the "professeurs maîtres de conférences." These are appointed by the minister if paid by the state; by the rector (the same person in another capacity) if paid by the University. And besides all these "professeurs titulaires," "professeurs chargés de cours," and "maîtres de conférences," there exists in Paris also a large body of men lecturing inside the University on subjects approved by the University, but other than those treated by the appointed professors. These "cours" are sanctioned by the University. They are of varying merit and their subjects range from "Mussulman Law" to "Principles of Colonisation in French West Africa," or from "Egypt in the Time of the Hyksos" to a "Study

of the Poor Law (*Assistance Publique*) in France." This custom of sanctioning cours other than those of the appointed professors enables rising young men to get a hearing and rising new subjects to be heard. The University demands only three things:

1. A guarantee of previous study on the part of the professor;

2. A scientific method in the subject treated, and

3. A subject included in the *Encyclopédie Universelle*.

Otherwise the door is wide open to the new man or the new science. And the University itself, while in no danger of running foolishly after new things, can adopt the new man or the new science when either has won his spurs. This is how new chairs get endowed in the Paris University with a frequency unmet elsewhere. While with us Oxford, that anointed teacher of dead learning, was only shamed by the ever-growing European reputation of Henry Sweet, and that after many years, into creating an ungenerous Readership in Phonetics which it comfortably allowed to lapse at his death. Thus we treat "new" men who are great scholars (of a world-wide fame) and a "new" science which in other lands has long since come into its own.

When I went from Paris to Oxford, as after a while I did, it was almost like passing from a laboratory of hard but living work to an interesting museum of antiquities. Quaint, charming, picturesque, full of an old-world interest, but of a university as I knew it hardly a trace. Did Oxford write upon its gates (as it well might), "As it was at the Renaissance so it ever shall be, Greek and Latin without End," one would have no quarrel with the place, but could then enjoy its calm and beauty in a deep aesthetic peace. But as the educational summit of a great nation, as the one of two final teaching authorities in a twentieth-century country, one can only mourn or rage.

It is the tradition of the French University that all lectures should be open and public. From the days when Abelard disputed on the hill even unto now the Sorbonne has taught all learners free, gratis, and for nothing. With the specialising of modern knowledge, with the specialising of the student in that knowledge, and with the taking over by the University of complicated examining functions, and the consequent preparation for those examinations, a system of "Cours fermés" has grown up. "Cours fermés" are "Cours" to which only students properly "inscribed" are admitted. And properly inscribed means passing the Baccalauréat or offering an equivalent and paying thirty francs, twenty for University fees and ten for the University library.

In the Livret d'Étudiant of our year there were no less than fifty-two pages of lectures all told, of which by far the larger proportion were open, absolutely free, to all who choose to go. Fifty-two pages and those of a good size and closely printed.

Students must attend a certain number of Cours fermés (the others, the public ones, are called Cours ouverts) in order to establish their right to be examined. They may go to as many Cours ouverts as they think fit. They are rarely, in the Sorbonne proper anyway, in a majority there. For the audience of a Cours ouvert is very mixed. Sometimes it is a fashionable audience from "the other side" (of the river), sometimes a medley of loafers who go simply for the warmth and shelter, and are never turned out as long as they behave themselves; or sometimes simply persistent hearers of lectures who sit through course after course, year in, year out, making it apparently as much a part of their daily life as eating or dressing. In post-graduate work, almost all "ouvert," a learned professor will sometimes find himself all of a sudden perhaps a celebrity on the boulevards, and his

lectures in consequence inundated by a crowd who come to see this latest lion.

There is a story told of Renan that when he had reached this pinnacle of fame and his "cours" in the Collège de France (like the École des Hautes Études, this is another "Etablissement d'enseignement supérieur") were taken possession of by a rush of sightseers so that his own students were crowded out, he gravely opened an Old Testament in the original Hebrew and, informing his audience that "the class would now proceed to a study of the text," handed it to the first person in the front row and so cleared the room.

The French say the danger of the Cours ouverts is the inducement it offers to play for popularity. But the professor must have done his work to get his chair, and the passing society lionising of an odd man here and there in the Faculté des Lettres (it is practically non-existent elsewhere) seems a very little off-set to the magnificence of such a system of untrammelled opportunity of learning. France, in effect, says to her children:

"The knowledge which the world now has, all this knowledge as far as possible shall be yours freely. I will give it you. Come you and hear it."

It is in fact not "la carrière," but "le savoir ouvert aux talents."

There has always been all through its history a large and imposing grandeur in the French conception of nationality which marks it proudly as its own. A "noblesse oblige," not of class, but of country, which redeems even the ineffable phrase of the Grand Monarque, "L'Etat c'est moi," not I, Louis, but I, France. A large assumption which he seems to have believed.

It is this sense of largeness, of magnificence, of a great idea generously carried out, that strikes one first and remains with one last in considering the University of

Paris. The number of its professors, its students, its buildings, its lectures speaks of the regal magnificence of its plan. And always there come back to me two things:

All this learning given freely to the people for nothing.

All this learning given freely to the students . . . for thirty francs.

What other nation has ever even conceived such an idea?

It was a day in late September when we read in the *Salle des Pas Perdus* the following notice:

"Students wishing to inscribe themselves for the ensuing winter term must attend at the secretary's office during the first weeks of October."

The reticent concierge in his little office, ragged by so many generations of students until the habit of never giving himself away had extended to everything, even to information about classrooms, reluctantly allowed us to draw from him the whereabouts of the secretary's office. For the time being and for this purpose the office was simply one of the classrooms, and we reached it through long marble corridors. The room was guarded on the outside by an official whose duty it was to inquire with much sternness what one wanted, and to fend off the obviously ineligible. And how many people quite ineligible, from old ladies with knitting bags and an air of inquiring after maid-servants to street loafers or the enterprising tourist, do apply one has to see to believe.

A man inside the room dealt out forms to be filled in by the intending students—lengthy forms inquiring into all sorts of things, as your parents' names, ages, position, and religion, but especially inquiring into your previous education from infancy up. We filled up

these with some fear and trembling. There were so many questions on so many things in such very official language, and all to be answered in French too! . . . that we had doubts.

But the Conseil was gracious. It accepted our equivalents. It took our thirty francs. It granted us our "cartes." We were now free of the University, its library and its lectures. It only remained for us to choose our own from among so many.

II

COURS OUVERTS

Every professor of the Sorbonne, of whatever grade, gives at least one public lecture a week. The lecture lasts a full hour, and always the approach of the lecturer is heralded by the coming of one of the attendants bearing a small tray on which stand a carafe of water, a glass with a spoon in it, and a small saucer piled with neat oblongs of lump sugar. This the janitor sets down on the official desk, pulls out the chair, and the professor enters.

All lectures, "ouverts" or "fermés," are delivered seated in France, except perhaps under stress of great oratory when I have occasionally seen a more than usually dramatic professor jump up from his chair and pace his platform. It was the great exception and never lasted long.

Lectures are delivered seated, and the audience may be anything from half a dozen students, or half a dozen loafers, to a huge amphitheatre full—even overfull with queues formed up outside waiting half an hour to get in and many turned away, "all seats taken"; and, after

noisy protestations, reserved rows for crowded-out students. The Sorbonne knows all extremes.

There runs a sort of rumour through Paris and suddenly it is the thing to "suivre les cours" of this or that professor. Then the amphitheatre will fill to its roof with a crowd, generally feminine in character and often distinctly fashionable. This may be flattering to the professor, but is not liked by the students. The Sorbonne student has a code of his own, and he does not appreciate this form of popularity for his professor. He resents it also for himself when it goes to these extremes as the intrusion of outsiders on his own special domain. He also resents it as a symptom of something wrong with the professor. "Farceur" is his usual comment. This is not always the case, of course, but any professor who achieves popularity on the boulevard may risk hostility or, at least, suspicion among the students.

I have a very vivid recollection of certain Cours ouverts of the late M. Gaston La Gourmet. These were crowded, fashionable, thronged with an admiring audience largely feminine, mostly mondaine. That in itself was a grievance. M. La Gourmet was an eloquent Southerner. A man of quick intelligence, young for a professor, short, lithe, with an upstanding brush of dark hair, and to me antipathetic. He had thick lips and a look as though he had been put away in oil for the winter. And the brilliancy of his intellect could not compensate me for the fact that his whole being seemed made up of intellect and appetite and of nothing else. But Paris, feminine, fashionable Paris, adored him, and flocked to his lectures in crowds.

This in itself was enough to create an atmosphere of hostility among the students who frankly accused him among themselves of playing to the gallery; but a worse thing happened. He had been seen, so it was said, driving openly across Paris in a fiacre with an actress of

the Opéra Bouffes. This was too much for the students' code of morals. (Recollect, too, the different position of actresses in France.) All their sense of decency was outraged. No professor should do such a thing. It was an enormity. The whole Sorbonne buzzed with virtuous indignation, for the laxness of the students' own moral standard does not extend (in the students' eyes) to the professors. It was necessary, they felt, to protest.

Accordingly at the next public lecture the amphitheatre was packed with students. And the fashionable public found itself, admitted, yes, that was part of the plan, but very much pressed for room, and forming an island in an encircling body of students that ran all round the amphitheatre and was thickly massed at the back and near the exits, the strategic points of possible attack.

The great man, preceded by the janitor bearing the tray with its carafe of water, its glass, its spoon, and the sugar, entered. The usual murmur of applause from delicately gloved hands followed and subsided. . . . The professor as usual bowed, took his seat, and opened his "serviette," the leather case, just two big pockets, in use in France for carrying papers, books, etc.

"Mesdames et messieurs," he began, "nous allons aujourd'hui . . ." Then came the loud war chant of the students, three beats on two notes.

"Lá Gõurmét, Lá Gõurmét."

Feet, hands, voices all together. It was like the rolling drums and the trampling march of a regiment.

Gradually, too, like the tramping march of a regiment it passed away. Monsieur la Gourmet began again.

"Mesdames et messieurs, nous allons examiner aujourd'hui les . . ."

Then his voice disappeared just as a stone thrown into the water, swallowed up by the war chant of the

students. His lips moved, but not a sound reached even the front rows.

"Lá Gōŕmét, Lá Gōŕmét."

And the tramp of feet and the beat of arms on wooden desks swamped the amphitheatre. For several minutes nothing else could be heard, then through the deep bass of the war chant with its accompaniment of beating hands and feet came single calls, words unintelligible to me then, comprehensible apparently to part of the fashionable audience and certainly to La Gourmet himself. The whole man changed. His eyes went blood-shot, his face livid, his lips under the close-clipped moustache and beard protruded like a negro's. He stood up. The fashionable audience divided itself, a little unequally, into two parts. One, the larger half, whose indignation seemed shot with a good deal of amusement and some malice, and the smaller half purely indignant, whose shouts of "shame, shame" could just be heard above the din.

The deafening war chant of the students, three beats on two notes, feet, arms, voices, still went on. It seemed endless. La Gourmet leaning on the table in front of him glared into the body of the hall, trembling with passion.

"Lá Gōŕmét, Lá Gōŕmét, Lá Gōŕmét."

It was pitiless and apparently eternal. But like all human effort, the noise had its ebbs and flows.

La Gourmet glared. He had one resource, he could suspend the meeting. The students still chanted. Then in an ebb of noise, gathering himself together and flinging the words into the room like so many missiles, which in truth they were, La Gourmet shouted:

"Je . . . je lève là séance," and with a movement which knocked the chair to the other side of the platform was gone.

The war chant like a passing regiment marching to

the roll of drums died slowly out. A thick buzz of conversation filled the amphitheatre. Half the audience was on its feet, some facing the platform looking for what would happen there next, some the back of the hall where always the war chant had sounded loudest. But nobody moved.

After a while those who were looking at the platform saw the janitor appear, walk up to the table, collect the books and papers scattered all over it, put them into the serviette, put that under one arm, pick up the tray with its carafe of water, its glass, its spoon, its sugar in narrow oblongs, and turn to go.

"Il ne revient pas?" some one shouted.

The janitor shook his head, made the word "parti" with his lips rather than spoke it, and vanished.

To the sound of the war chant, three beats on two notes, the fashionable audience took itself slowly away. The students left victorious on the battlefield came jumping in rows over the desks from back to front.

"Lá Gõurmét, Lá Gõurmét, Lá Gõurmét."

Feet, arms, voices, all together.

"Lá Gõurmét, Lá Gõurmét, Lá Gõurmét." It was a battle march of triumph now and rang out over the whole University. I could even hear it in the street as I turned out of the courtyard.

The cours of Monsieur La Gourmet continued to be "très suivis." The "Conseil" dealt with the students. There was no further row, but shortly afterwards the professor accepted another appointment which removed him from the Sorbonne proper. The licence students saw him no more.

Cours ouverts are rarely so crowded or so exciting (this was the only row I ever saw), a large proportion of them are very much the reverse. Some professors lecture to an array of empty benches and an audience of five. And that even when they are in the current of degree

work, so to speak, which ensures them a certain number of students each year, and means as a rule that they lecture on less erudite and more generally appreciated subjects.

These professors are usually sound scholars who will make no concessions to public ignorance. If they are professors outside of ordinary degree work, they lecture for the few special students who wander into them from the unknown perhaps. If they are professors inside degree work their public lectures are public in the sense that the door is open to whoever enters, that is all.

Monsieur Nazère, for instance, in all the time that I went to his *Cours ouverts* on French mediaeval history seemed even to refuse to see any one but his own half-dozen students. We all sat together in the front row and he never looked beyond us. And his public lectures were just as technical as his student classes. He seemed to be saying, "If the audience can profit by this well and good, if not . . . tant pis."

I've no means of knowing if he thought all this consciously or not, but he certainly acted it. He always seemed to me the embodiment of the type of mind which pins so much of its educational faith to "mental discipline." He was a straight, rather tall, red-complexioned man, with a back like a ramrod and a bristly moustache, who always looked as if he had been groomed with a curry comb. And his lectures bristled like his moustache with all the hard points of knowledge. No one perhaps knew more of the growth of government in mediaeval France than he did—all that fascinating, slowly growing thrust of the "common people" into a world believed to exist for kings and rulers only; that struggle of the people for the possession of themselves, their bodies, their souls, their labours, that struggle of those who were France for recognition in France, which went on then and goes on still. Monsieur Nazère knew all

this. He had all the charters at his fingers' ends. He gave them to us. His knowledge bristled with facts and technicalities. The half-dozen students in the front row might see the light, see the absorbing human interest, the vivid throbbing life, behind the now dead phrases, but the tremendous issues passed over the heads of the rest of the audience wrapped in unknown technical terms.

I wondered at first why they came. A saturnine, buttoned-up individual, lean, sardonic. Two old men in somewhat damaged overcoats who sat not exactly asleep, but apparently very far from awake in the warmest corner of the classroom. An odd, thin, little woman in much-worn black, with strange ends of veils, and ties, and bows that fluttered when she moved. She was always moving, in strange, silent darts, even when she was sitting still. She carried a threadbare black satin bag on long wisps of ribbons, and while she sat she opened it a little, a very little way, furtively darted in a hand and drew out a stale crust which she as furtively ate. She reminded me irresistibly of Miss Flite and her reticule of documents. And like Miss Flite she never missed, day in, day out, her attendance at the University.

I grew in time to know her very well. She haunted all the lecture rooms. One day I asked the janitor about her.

"Comes for the warmth and the rest, I expect," he said, "like so many of them. So long as they look respectable and behave we can't turn them out."

I had a sudden light on the irony of all things. The magnificent grandeur of the French scheme of "*Le savoir ouvert aux talents*," the knowledge of all the world poured out at the feet of the nation, and the lecture room just a haven of warmth and rest for the broken-down outcasts of society who can still continue to "look respectable."

The janitor went on. "They are here all day," he said. "They come in with the first lecture in the morning, and they go out with the last in the evening."

"What do they do at the end of the term?" I asked, curious.

"It's mostly warm then, you see," he answered. (The French term runs with only a break of one week at Christmas and three at Easter from October to May or June.) "They sit in the Luxembourg, or go to the Louvre, I suppose."

Then he nodded to little Miss Flite pulling her threadbare satin bag together by its long wisps of ribbon. "She's been here all my time, and as long as any of us can remember."

We watched her make one of her strange silent darts up the length of the lecture room.

"But why come here?" I asked. "There are so many other lectures to choose from, more attractive."

He shook his head. "Not at this time in the morning, and not Cours ouverts. He's the only one."

I smiled. "Perhaps that's why he chose it," I said.

The janitor smiled too, a little superciliously. "He has no following, Nazère," he began . . .

And then the voice of the saturnine, buttoned-up individual was heard suddenly booming over the classroom.

"He seeks no idle crowd of fashionable admirers," it said. "Nazère, il n'en veut pas. Il a raison. Il a tout à fait raison. C'est un savant. A real scholar, not one of these talkers, le fléau de la France. Ces beaux parleurs qui ne disent rien. Believe me, mademoiselle, I know them. France is honeycombed with them. Everywhere, everywhere they are and talk . . . to say nothing. Outside the University as in, as in, monsieur et madame, they swarm. They take the fashionable hour, the afternoon, to talk, and to say nothing. To draw crowds

and always to say nothing. Ces professeurs de cours d'après-midi que sont-ils? Je vais vous le dire. Ce ne sont, remarquez-le, ce ne sont que des fanfaronnades. Pour les études solides le matin. Pour l'après-midi des fumistes," or "hot air" as they say in America.

He paused. The obvious pause of the orator before winging himself for another flight.

"Les plaines qui s'étendent vers l'océan . . ."

But I fled. And left him to praise silence like Carlyle in long emphatic, well-balanced periods, the exaggerated type of what he condemned.

It has since puzzled me to think what "les plaines qui s'étendent vers l'océan" were doing "dans cette galère." Subsequently they passed with us into an accepted type of oratory. After all so much that one does hear is merely "les plaines qui s'étendent vers l'océan," only not so well phrased.

La Gourmet and Nazère were perhaps the extremes of two very different types of professors, and of Cours. The average in attendance and technicality came between. Good, sensible, well-put, understandable lectures that attracted a reasonable sort of audience, kept it sufficiently interested while it was there, gave it a great deal of information of the kind described as "sound" in a style that was easy and fluent, so that one was always sure, even if other things lacked, of listening to an hour's lecture well phrased and well delivered, and this is not by any means usual in the University lectures of other lands. It stands out pre-eminently as the characteristic of the French Cours.

Take, for example, Monsieur Nodier, "Père" Nodier as he was called by the students, a grey-headed, rather rotund professor with always the air of a "bon père de famille." A man who knew all that every one knew about his particular subject, all of whose information would always be pre-eminently safe and sensible, if not exactly

inspiring; who had taken "Cours ouverts" and "fermés" for so many years you felt he could have taken them in his sleep without there being very much difference; who could give you a discourse on Pascal or Madame de Sévigné with equal accuracy of fact, soundness of opinion, and absence of inspiration; who told you about both of them everything it was proper for the literary critic to say, and told it you all neatly, clearly, fluently, in sentences that left no particular mark but never halted.

I grew to have quite an affection for "le bon père Nodier," always so like himself, so equal to his own sensible, sound average, that one knew beforehand in any given subject the kind of thing he would say and the kind of way he would say it. And if ever I wanted to know what was the received French opinion on any one or anything, the safe, traditional, majority opinion, I had only to go to Père Nodier and I should be sure of getting it. He was a good type for an average.

You were doubly sure of this when you heard Lavissee. For Lavissee was Nodier, all the soundness and the sense, the clearness and the ease, all the make of mind which made Nodier typical of the French average, transposed above that average. Lavissee was sound and sensible; he was also inspiring. He, too, knew all that every one else knew about his special subject, but he also knew more. He knew what he alone knew. He would tell you the received opinion, and his own on top, whether it agreed or disagreed. And he told it you in sentences which also never halted and which did leave a mark. Added to that air of "bon père de famille," which superficially he also had, was a note of authority and of an iron will. No one called him "père" Lavissee. And when the students rioted and he was called upon to deal with them he did it, and did it effectually.

Lavissee was short with a little grey beard, and if you had itemed his appearance out it would have been

astonishingly like that of "père" Nodier, but the effect was so different that one hardly realised the resemblance. He had besides a pair of piercingly blue eyes that looked at you from beneath a pair of very level white eyebrows. And he looked at you, if you were a student, as though you were barely three and still in the nursery.

I had two interviews with him, for he received students, and I seemed to dwindle even from three years old down to about six months. He was not greatly enamoured of women students, and told me so, and I gathered that he had no great predilection for my country. (This was long before the days of the Entente.) Somehow I rebelled against keeping my remarks within the limits of my sex and my supposed age, and I found I had quite a lot to say about my country. I even ventured to criticise that figure which looms so large through French literature and history (Lavissee was a modern French history man), Louis XIV., whom quite frankly I detest. Lavissee's blue eyes drilled two big holes right through me, and he grimly remarked that my opinions were of no account whatever, and on the whole it was as well I was taking literature and not history. But he apparently told the story (as an example of English feminine impertinence, I suppose) to the other professors, for I heard it long afterwards from one of their wives myself. From that moment I always got a special gimlet glance all of my own when the lecture brought us any reference to England or to Louis.

Lavissee was engaged in his "Cours ouverts" in a survey of France, and of Europe in relation to France, at the time of the great Louis, of the "roi Soleil" in all the brilliance of his youth and his glory. He gave us thumbnail sketches of the other rulers which I have never forgotten. He read us extracts from the reports of ambassadors accredited to the various courts, or of the foreign ambassadors at Versailles. He gave us accounts

by eye-witnesses of all the sights of the times from the levée of the king to the weaving of tapestry. But his eyes were always fixed, not on the human struggle which underlay the historic event, but on the abstract history of the glory of France. His personages were live enough, but they were the little bits of mosaic which made up the great figure of La France. That stood out the real being.

Lavis's Cours were always well filled with a steady public audience that never seemed to fail—a great many men, middle-aged "rentiers" apparently, with a taste for history, who would tell you what his Cours were back from year to year. And also a great number of what one might call the regular University audience, people who went to certain "Cours" regularly, as one might read half an hour a day, without any special end in view save a general feeling of improving themselves. These flocked to Lavis, just as they flocked to Petit de Julleville or to Auguste France or Crozier at the Collège de France over the way. You devoted, say, one hour a week or one hour a day to hearing University professors of a certain eminence, and if it was Greek tragedy, or mediæval romance, or French seventeenth-century history, was all one. You took them in turn, one this year, the other next, or all together as time and inclination allowed. Then you sat and listened intelligently and for the rest went about your daily business.

The system of the "Cours ouverts" undoubtedly tends to cultivate this type of listener, and you can find people who have taken their regular dose of University lecture daily or weekly for five, ten, or even fifteen years. What effect it has on them would be difficult to say. But it must at least give them a familiarity with the current truths of the subject whose "Cours" they have chosen to attend, which serves to make them more generally intelligent. It certainly provides them with matter for conversation, if the matter be only the

relative merits of La Gourmet and Nodier for example. This type of lecture-frequenter chooses almost exclusively the big people, professors whose name and fame are assured; and they equally filled the classrooms of Crozier and of Auguste France at the Collège de France as of Lavissee and Petit de Julleville at the Sorbonne proper.

Petit de Julleville was a very different man, of a very different type to the popular La Gourmet, the technical Nazère, or the "bon père" Nodier, and equally different to Lavissee. He was, as his name proclaimed, an aristocrat, and he looked it, was it, through all his being and all his knowledge. A "savant" doubled with an aristocrat, and a gentleman to his long, taper-shaped finger tips. A distinguished man, one of those rare specimens of aristocracy that really have race written all over them, and are apparently unconscious of it. His rather long face with the high forehead and the thin aquiline nose, his tall, slightly bent figure, the white, rather large, well-shaped hands, the sort of crisp distinction of his speech which gave to each word an impress of its own, making it different from the same word in other people's mouths, a man whose high mental and personal integrity was apparent at the first glance, a man to whom "noblesse oblige," whether of race, position, or attainments, was a living force. The full amount of what I, for one, owe to Monsieur Petit de Julleville would be difficult to say, and that simply as between lecturer and listener. I came into contact with him in no other way than through his Cours ouverts.

Monsieur Petit de Julleville was studying the mystery plays of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and was studying them thoroughly and very dramatically. One got not only a vivid impression of the play itself, but of the people and the conditions that produced it, of the audience that saw it, and the persons who acted it. In fact, besides the play there was most of France of the

thirteenth century and of western mediaeval human nature. Never once was the play snowed under beneath a mass of documentary material leading up to it or away from it or concerned with it, as I have known it in less fortunate lands.

My first real acquaintance with the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, those centuries which have covered France with her unsurpassable cathedrals, came to me through the mystery plays and the Cours of Monsieur Petit de Julleville. And yet somehow it is not first of all as a mediaeval specialist that I think of Monsieur Petit de Julleville. To me he is classed with Madame Weisman as one of the people who showed me what France really is. All through what I might call the subject matter of his lectures there would come little sentences, the conclusions of a large experience, of an acute observation of men and things, which were scattered like seeds on the minds of the listeners, and which like seeds would spring up bearing fruit years after.

"Literature," he said once, "is never a picture of the actual state of any society; but only of the imaginations of that time."

A remark which has explained much to me.

At the same time as I took thirteenth-century drama I also took thirteenth-century romance. This was at the Collège de France (where all Cours are public) under Monsieur Auguste France.

The great difference between the lectures at the Collège de France and the "Cours ouverts" of the Sorbonne proper is that the lecturer is not allowed any "eau sucrée." No janitor precedes him into the classroom bearing the tray with the carafe of water, the glass, the teaspoon, the lumps of sugar on the little white saucer. He comes in by himself. There is also somehow more of an intimate and homely atmosphere in the lecture, partly due, I think, to the small size of the

classrooms and to their construction which allows of the audience sitting round the lecturer. They are very old, and the furniture was in my time as antediluvian as that of Harrow.

Monsieur Auguste France was tall and urbane, with polished manners and white hair, growing bald, and a white beard. He had a great reputation and was usually called "Maître" by his students, which, it struck me, he liked. Monsieur France had great dignity and great knowledge of his subject, and you quickly became conscious of both. There was that in his manner which intimated to you delicately that he was Auguste France, the greatest living authority on Romance literature. He first conveyed to you his rôle, so to speak, and then acted up to it. The performance was superb, what would be termed in the phraseology of the theatre "finished." I enjoyed it immensely and I am sure no one but a Frenchman could have succeeded in doing it at all. The greatest living German authority on "Mittelhochdeutsch" when I went to his classes used to turn his back on his students all through the lecture, and he said the first word as he shot into the classroom and the last over his shoulder as he shot out, and all the rest in between without pause or apparent breathing space.

Monsieur France's audience consisted of his students, one or two distinguished strangers, who would introduce themselves to him at the end of the lecture, the usual University habitués of a slightly less stereotyped kind—middle-aged people of both sexes who had suddenly decided to take up Romance and had come to study it at the source. These took copious notes, and were often mixed in their minds as to the difference between "langue d'oc" and "langue d'oïl," or something equally fundamental, and generally seemed trying to begin in the middle without any idea of what was the beginning.

Perhaps the most persistent attendant of Monsieur

France's lectures was a fat old senator who regularly sat in the front row under Monsieur France's very eye and within a foot or two of his very chair (there was a sort of wooden barrier all round him), and who regularly went to sleep half-way through, and also regularly snored. And we heard in Monsieur France's suave tones perhaps of the love of Aucassin and Nicolette through the trombone accompaniment of deep senatorial snores. Monsieur France betrayed no visible irritation, but obviously he did not find it "in the picture." Still a senator is a senator, and can hardly be requested to retire or be removed by the hall porter . . . at least, Monsieur France was not the man to do that deed.

At last one day when Monsieur France was eyeing the senator whose snores, louder than usual, rose and fell through the classroom, I took a sudden determination. I dropped my notebook, and in picking it up I trod severely upon the toe of that senator. He woke up quickly. He seemed, so to speak, to catch himself out in his own snore. There was a sudden pause. Then Monsieur France, flashing a barely perceptible glance upon me, went on with his sentence. I absorbed myself in my note-taking. The senator stayed awake.

There is an interesting story I once heard concerning Monsieur Auguste France and a certain university not a hundred miles from Dover. This university set an examination paper in Romance, and all the students of a certain professor were ploughed. They brought him the paper. He was an old pupil of Monsieur France. So a short while after when he happened to be in Paris he went to see him and get his opinion on the paper.

"I myself," he said at the end of his explanation, "why I myself can answer only two questions."

Monsieur France studied the paper, paused, raised his eyebrows. "And which," he asked gently, "is the second question, I wonder? I myself can answer only one."

The only other Collège de France professor whose Cours I attended regularly were those of Monsieur Crozier, the Greek specialist. All my other lectures went into a plan of study of France, French literature and French history. Monsieur Crozier alone stood outside of it. He was a sort of extra I allowed myself as a treat, and I went to his Cours just as other University "habitués" did, just to listen and not to work at all. I did it because I wanted to hear something of Greek literature and because of Monsieur Crozier's great reputation. And also because he spoke the most delicious French.

It was Monsieur Crozier who introduced me to Greece and peopled it for me with real human beings. It was he who put me on speaking terms with Sophocle, Euripide, Æschyle, Aristophane, Homère, Hérodote, Aristote, and such they have remained to me ever since, despite all the jibes of English-speaking classicists. Though why they should jibe remains a mystery. In the same way Tite-Live, Plaute, Tacite, are realities, while Livy, Plautus, and Tacitus are only names from the wearisome Latin lessons of my schooldays. Livy was (and remains) a first-class bore. But how could any one with such a frivolous, music-hally sort of name as Tite-Live be anything but entertaining? Whether it is only because I got to Greece through France, or whether there is kinship between the Attic and the French intelligence, I am not classicist enough to know, but to me that seems its most salient characteristic. The lightness of touch, the artistry, the wit, the quick intelligence, even the strain of indecent jesting, the "esprit gaulois," are all there, and Monsieur Crozier brought them all out, but especially the wit. He had a neat wit of his own, and a voice and delivery that would have made poetry of the roughest prose.

One term we "did" Aristophanes. And between the wit of Aristophanes and that of Monsieur Crozier the sedate

old-world calm of the Collège de France was broken with bursts of hilarious laughter. I can never be sufficiently grateful to Monsieur Crozier that Aristophanes came to me as a comedian surrounded with bubbles of laughter, and not as a classical text, or as examples of eccentric grammatical construction.

I am sure that half the joy of literature, any literature, is ruthlessly destroyed by teachers expecting their pupils to examine the details before they have grasped the spirit. And the very last thing a class often hears about is the comedy of the great comedians. To be studied with unbending solemnity is one of those little ironies which Fate reserves for world-famed humorists. The last grim jest which they and Time play on mankind.

I speak with feeling. I have been forced to study Shakespeare, Sheridan, Lamb, among others, in this manner. And I would seriously suggest that professors however learned, or teachers however able, should not be allowed to take classes in the great comic writers unless they can first satisfy a bench of jesters of their sense of humour. It is surely one of the worst of literary crimes to kill out the laughter of the great mirth-makers of the world.

This was the last thing Monsieur Crozier did with Aristophanes. He laid the emphasis on the comedy, and used his learning to bring it out. In the same way, too, with the tragedians, the emphasis was on the tragedy and the poetry. He conveyed that to us first before he went on to the "Greekness" and the rest of the erudition . . . which is what the author intended anyway, and as one of the trade I think his feelings should be considered a little. And he was so successful that I can laugh over Aristophanes (in translation) as I laugh over *Punch*, while to enjoy Shakespeare or Lamb I have often to make such strenuous efforts to forget that the laughter is but a poor thing.

Crozier, Lavisse, Petit de Julleville, La Gourmet, Nazère, le bon père Nodier, these were all types of the University professor as he exists in France and all so different to the university professor as he exists elsewhere.

Broadly speaking I think one could divide the Sorbonne professors, in relation to their public lectures, into three classes:

1. There were those who, accepting the idea of the Cours ouverts as a lecture for the public, tried to interest the public in the lecture.

2. Those who, accepting the Cours ouverts as a lecture to which the public are admitted, made no concessions to it.

3. And those, the really big men, who, without lowering the standard of their scholarship, could yet express scientific truth so simply as to be understood of the people, the difference between whose public and whose student lectures was not one of standard but of form.

I have listened to all kinds in Paris, even to those who attempted the first and could not do it. The second are good scholars, men who know their subject. And the third are rare, for they make difficult things clear, and to explain difficult things clearly means more knowledge, not necessarily of the given subject, but more knowledge of all things.

That is perhaps why the second class abounds in Germany almost to the exclusion of the first, while the third class, rare everywhere naturally, is less rare in France than elsewhere. For given the intellect of the real scholar, that intellect being French will be much less likely to shut itself up within the four walls of its subject and stay there imprisoned. Once it is great enough to observe its subject it will, more often, be great enough to come outside of it.

III

COURS FERMÉS

Students from the first row to the last. And almost every one of them men, the, to us, curiously mature young men of round about twenty, with eighteen as a minimum age and twenty-three as a maximum.

The course for the licence of whatever kind is two years, and the "Licence ès lettres avec mention littéraire," which we were taking, was one of the most crowded, and the students filled the classroom from floor to ceiling.

Outside the door stood the janitor with the attendance book. This each student had to sign, and if his name does not figure with sufficient frequency the "Conseil" will not give him an "attestation," and he gets no "permis" to present himself at the examination.

Signing the book without attending the Cours is not, of course, unknown. But you have to be there, outside the door, in the quarter of an hour before the stated time of the lecture (usually 9.0 in the morning) in order to sign it. The consecrated jest of the janitor when you had signed was to inquire which way you were going, in or out. If you were late you could attend the lecture but not sign the book, for the janitor was supposed to close his book a few minutes before the time of the class, and did in fact close it a few seconds before, amid the execrations of the late comers whose voices in rage preceded them as they tore up the stairs.

Stories of free fights between enraged students and unyielding janitors are among the traditions of the University, but like other legends they always date some while back.

As far as I know nothing very violent happened during my time. It is true we were nearly always early. I liked a front place where I could spread myself and listen, and not be distracted by the antics of students who came for other purposes than study. Some of them talked, some played surreptitious games, some read newspapers. There was a celebrated incident of a newspaper in the class of Monsieur Faguet one day which I have never forgotten.

The "Conseil" of the University sets certain books and authors for the examination each year, and the work of the Cours fermés is to study these in detail. Some professors do it line by line, word by word almost. Some discuss the thing as a whole, and then pick out the difficulties. Some mark off a piece to be done each time, and then if they linger too long over the beginning have to hurry the end or leave it out altogether. Every one has his method. Usually in his Cours ouverts of the same year the professor takes one or more of the authors "set" for examination in that year and expounds them generally. So that Cours fermés is an intensified study of an author in a particular work, and Cours ouverts a study of that same author in relation to all his works.

Well, the "Conseil" in its wisdom had set in our year among the works of Corneille his *Discours sur les trois Unités*. And of course we had the *Discours* and Aristotle as well. Now with all due respect to Corneille and Aristotle, the whole is deadly dull. Even Monsieur Faguet, who could be witty over most things, suffered. So the epidemic of newspaper reading spread. The amphitheatre continued crowded. Monsieur Faguet was a favourite, and his classes, even on the deadly unities, could be interesting. Besides academic opinion in France cherishes its unities (they are quite necessary to the understanding of the playwright of the Grand Siècle), and the students knew it was dead certain questions would be set on them.

So they crowded to the amphitheatre, two or three hundred of them. And a certain proportion read newspapers in the dull moments.

Monsieur Faguet was a little brown man who talked with all the rest of himself quite as eloquently as he did with his tongue. His elbows were particularly expressive. And he had a way of jerking information into you through them which never seemed to fail. He could shrug his shoulders so that they rose higher than the crown of his head and buried it. And one of his most expressive gestures which never failed of effect was to place an elbow on the table and slowly move the hand, the fingers pointing upwards, round and round on the wrist, gradually working the arm up until at the climax his hand was describing circles in the air at arm's length above his head. I am perfectly convinced that his knees and his feet, which I could not see, were equally eloquent.

Monsieur Faguet too loved eau sucrée. He always drank at least one glassful, usually two. And all his gestures from the moment when he selected and placed the two lumps of sugar in the glass, through the careful pouring out of the water, to the elaborate stirring with the teaspoon until there was a whirlpool in the glass which extended the whole depth of it, were eloquent and expressive too beyond words.

Much of what he taught me is indissolubly bound up in my mind, not with the words he used, but with his gestures. Certain views on the fables of La Fontaine, for instance, are always connected for me with the careful balancing of a teaspoon on the edge of a glass to represent the weighing of opinion, the beating of the spoon in the air to demonstrate the summing up of judgment, and the sudden boring of it into the audience to wing home the truth of the conclusion.

Monsieur Faguet was as easy in his professorial chair as if he were sitting at home in his shirt sleeves. When

he drank his eau sucrée the class waited his leisure. When he chose his lumps of sugar it waited his careful selection. When he stirred it round and round and round and round—I have seen him stir it for three minutes at a time—the class in solemn silence watched and waited. . . . If he wanted a quotation he turned over the leaves of his book undisturbed, while the whole amphitheatre looked on and listened to the little comments he would make to himself on any matter which caught his eye as he glanced down the pages.

“Tiens,” he would say aloud, lifting his eyebrows and reading a long sentence to himself, “Peu d’idées, beaucoup de phrases,” and he would turn the page. Monsieur Faguet was not absent-minded at all, any more than a child is, but just completely concentrated on whatever he happened to be doing. I think I was particularly lucky to hear him in his Cours ouverts on La Fontaine, whose genius suited him to perfection.

For that very reason the Three Unities did not. And newspapers appeared more or less openly among the students in the back rows. Monsieur Faguet took his classes in one of the amphitheatres which in arrangement was more like a demonstration theatre, with rows of seats so steeply graded that the professorial chair was at the bottom of a well.

We were immersed that morning in a long and tedious comparison between the Unities of Aristotle and their reincarnation in Corneille. Monsieur Faguet had already drunk two glasses of eau sucrée. And each time the class had waited at the choosing of the sugar, at the pouring of the water, at the stirring of the mixture, and many times at the drinking of it. Therefore when Monsieur Faguet paused again nobody was surprised. He mixed no more eau sucrée however. He gazed fixedly up, far on high toward the ceiling of the amphitheatre.

And we waited. Still Monsieur Faguet did not speak,

and still he gazed serenely heavenwards. The pause lengthened.

Then without altering his position, or raising his voice, in the sweetest tone possible he spoke:

"Je vois en haut," he said, and everybody looked round and up.

". . . un petit étudiant." We all saw him.

". . . qui lit." The "petit étudiant" with the gaze of 600 eyes upon him became suddenly conscious of himself.

". . . qui lit son journal." The miserable student tried to stuff it hurriedly in his pocket.

"Sans doute," and Monsieur Faguet's tones were dulcet in the extreme, "plus habitué au café qu'à l'étude il se trompe de local."

The miserable student's blushes spread to the top of his head and the class roared, for the shot had gone home.

Each professor had his own way of taking Cours fermés. Each took a certain number of the books and authors set for the examination, treated the author generally in his public lectures, and the specific book in his students' classes. Beside which each of them was supposed to give out and correct a certain amount of written work each term. Their methods varied greatly. The bon père Nodier, for instance, gave out subjects each time and you could write essays and send them in once a week if you wanted to. There the matter ended more or less. He gave you a "note" and marked you in a book, and you got what profit and satisfaction you could out of the matter.

La Gourmet's method was quite different. He gave out a number of subjects once in the term, collected the essays, corrected them at some length in red ink, sorted them into groups, and discussed each group in class, using certain of the best and worst as subject matter for discussion.

Monsieur Faguet again gave out a number of subjects for essays towards the end of the term, casually as it were and when you least expected it. And some weeks after you waited on the steps of the platform at the end of the class in half-dozens at a time while he returned them to you. And you might get one second, or two minutes, or a quarter of an hour with him, or have it simply handed back to you as Fate and Monsieur Faguet's inclination or perhaps the merits of the composition determined.

All Cours fermés were certainly thorough and every one of them was "live"—all those I went to anyway. And the level of attention and intelligence and work among the students was very high. Nine-tenths of them, out of an attendance which ran into three hundred, were there to work and did work. I think what I noticed most and enjoyed most was that intellectual *rapprochement* between the professor and the class. They were not empty vessels into which he poured things, but receivers at the other end of a wireless which flashed back intelligence of their own. Some professors got back more, some less, but all got it. And this was, I think, the greatest difference between the University work of France and of Germany as I knew it.

During our two licence years the Cours fermés for the "mention littéraire" were occupied with:

Two books of the *Pensées* of Pascal.

An epistle of Boileau.

Certain works of the *Pléiade*.

The *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu.

A play of Corneille and his *Discours sur les trois Unités*.

Two plays of Racine.

The *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* of Molière.

An *Oraison funèbre* of Bossuet.

Some fables of La Fontaine.

Rousseau's *Lettre sur les Spectacles*.

The *Hernani*. of Victor Hugo (now a classic).

Chateaubriand's *René*, *Les Natchez*, and his Red Indian sentimentalities.

The University in my time drew what may be termed its halo line at about 1850 and no author was a classic who came after then. Those who wrote before the Pléiade do not come into Modern French. Roughly, then, one got authors from two and a half centuries of French literature with, of course, a double dose of those representing the Grand Siècle. I did my Grand Siècle with some thoroughness, and if I have not that awe and reverence for it which traditional French opinion demands, I did learn that in truth it is the kernel to the literature of Modern France as distinguished from Mediaeval, very much more so than any one period in English literature, because, with all its limitations, its arbitrary, its imposed limitations of style and taste, it does express the essential Frenchness of France. For roughly between the four cardinal points of La Fontaine, Racine, Molière, and Pascal the soul of the French nation can be said to find its orientation.

The classes for the Agrégation are run on much the same general lines as those for the Licence (I never of course attended any), but the average age is some years higher.

Of post-graduate work there is in the University a very great deal, more than in any other University with which I am acquainted. Besides the Cours of all those professors not taking Licence or Agrégation work (a good proportion of the whole), any or all of which might be attended by the students preparing for their doctor's thesis, there is a whole school set apart definitely for such work, the École des Hautes Études.

Here the classes were select and strenuous, and all the

French and most of the foreign students had long since graduated. Onesometimesaw greybeards, professors from other lands, teachers who had spent perhaps half a lifetime at their work; a group of serious, earnest, verging towards middle-aged men or women. And just that the "school" might not be too entirely solemn, always a sprinkling of cranks possessed by some impossible theory which they were endeavouring to thrust upon a ribald and reluctant world.

Here before very long Richard found his home. A fine ear, attuned to the slightest variation of the spoken sound, had quickly marked him out in the phonetic classes which he had attended at first simply to get a hold on spoken French. It was patent even to an outsider like myself, much more to the professor. And this sudden discovery of a natural aptitude for this youngest of the sciences altered the planned course of his work and our life.

The Licence was given up, a doctor's degree with a thesis in phonetics decided upon. A momentous decision which needed, strange to say, a good deal of argument and persuasion. The truth was phonetics came to Richard too naturally and too easily for him really to believe in his own capacity for it just at first. But when at last he had realised that it was there . . . from that moment I attended the Licence classes, Cours ouverts and Cours fermés, widowed and alone. Richard had removed himself to higher regions, to the school of the Hautes Études.

Here in a class of twenty students with sixteen different nationalities sitting at the feet of that great teacher and enthusiastic genius, Monsieur Paul Passy, he analysed devocalised *n*'s, practised Arabian *h*'s, experimented in aspirated *l*'s, and the sound of rounded *u*'s soon had more music for him than all the poetry of Racine, while the history of a nasalised vowel across the Christian centuries

or over the map of Europe was worth all the glories of French prose. After a while his Cours resolved themselves mainly into the phonetic classes of the "Hautes Études" and the lectures on comparative philology of Monsieur Victor Henri.

Monsieur Henri was a savant. But he had just that same quality of artistic delight in his material which struck me so in my friend Mr. Butcher Charles Le Gros. His glowing description of pronouns, adverbs, or weird little particles, their habits, manners, and peculiarities, was touched with the same poetic glow. I myself only heard Monsieur Henri once, just for the sake of hearing him, and my knowledge of comparative philology is but sufficient to grasp my total ignorance of it, but I carried away with me, and I still have after all these years, a tender solicitude and an untempered admiration for that linguistic chef d'œuvre, the Gothic pronoun "mig." After each lengthy and very learned analysis of "mig's" history, aptitudes, and transformations, Monsieur Henri would beam all over his plain person, and in a tone of triumph, rapping the blackboard loudly, would exult:

"Maintenant je vais vous dire. Regardez-le. C'est—c'est 'mig.'" And he folded his arms proudly while his spectacles gleamed.

"Cours ouverts, cours fermés!" The one quality which stands out from you all distinct, unapproachable by other universities, is your "liveness." For the French mind will never admit dullness as an excuse, much less as a reason, for thoroughness. And it has never accepted as a divinely ordained faith that terrible educational doctrine of the "disciplining of the mind," a doctrine which, paradoxically, seeks to impart instruction by killing all interest in it.

Teaching in France, in all the universities of France,

in all the colleges and schools which go to make up the University of Paris, is live. Its worst fault is that it may sometimes be popular.

IV

The weakest side of the French University is its absence of interest in the life of the student outside the classroom, for which indeed the University assumes no responsibility and of which it takes little care.

The students lodge where they like or where they can, all over the quarter or outside of it. Many of them with parents or relations perhaps, that is as it happens. Little or no attempt is made to organise them, nor do they seem to organise themselves. One students' "Union" does exist. It has even existed since the reorganisation of the University, but had I not found out the fact from a printed list I should never have known it. There are no sports clubs, not even a debating society, although one would have thought that with his quick intelligence and far greater powers of expression a debating society would have appealed to the French student. Nor have they (always excepting the "Union" whose practical touch with their lives I could not discover) any centre of their own for social life. There are certain cafés in the quarter where they most do congregate, certain parts of the Luxembourg Gardens where they sit and talk, but of their own and for themselves there seems nothing.

The University provides a course of mental training and there its jurisdiction ends. The students live the rest of their lives, not part of a great institution, but each as he pleases.

The only time one is conscious of any "esprit de corps" running through the whole body of the students is when they are out for trouble. Then each student wears his

béret, or black velvet cap something like a tam-o'-shanter bound with a coloured ribbon round the edge which differs for each faculty. For medicine red, for letters blue, for law green, and so on. They parade the streets, come into collision with the authorities perhaps. Then the University, which takes the attitude of blandly ignoring their existence outside of its own doors, takes cognisance of the facts, and may, after judgment, suspend the culprits. Outside of the classroom in fact it acts only as a policeman towards its students, ready to interfere if the law is broken.

Since the time of which I speak the foreign students, greatly increased in numbers, have an association of their own. The women students, also greatly increased, have a small restaurant and a club. But neither of these things really alters the situation. Never once in the whole of my time at the Sorbonne did I see a single notice of a meeting of a students' society put on the notice board.

At the same time there is always a students' car in the processions of the Carnival and of the Mi-Carême (middle of Lent) when the Church allows a break in the strict observance of its fast, a break which is still rigorously observed, especially by those who do not keep the fast. It is an occasion for feasting, processions, confetti-throwing, and other French forms of bank-holiday making. At such times and at other public ceremonies, the students as such take part, a part mostly confined to what may be called the pageant.

For instance, one of the most interesting things the students ever did was to present in the square in front of the Sorbonne Church, and exactly in the conditions of the Middle Ages, so far as these could be reproduced, a mediaeval mystery play, followed by a mediaeval farce. The thing which to me marked this off entirely from all other erudite reconstructions of the past was first the verve with which it was presented, as something real and

alive, and then, and above all else, the reproduction of the mediaeval audience. For, except a few rows of ticketed, railed-off, reserved seats enclosed by a rope, the audience which filled the square was just the Paris crowd, the lineal descendants of those who may many a time have watched this very play. The upmake of their minds must of course have been different, for five centuries had passed between, but to judge from the records many of their remarks were still much the same.

The play came at Whitsuntide when the trees of the boulevards were bursting into leaf, when the sky was blue and clear, and the air even in the heart of Paris filled full of that push to life which comes with the first long warm days—those sunny days when even the most hardworking pause and look out and say, "*Il fait beau aujourd'hui, il faut s'amuser un peu.*"

The stage occupied a high platform built in the middle of the wide rue de la Sorbonne just in front of the church. It had the tiers of the mediaeval stage with the Paradise, an arched doorway on one side, and the Hell, in the shape of the open jaws of a "*Leviathan*," on the other, from which realistic flames sometimes appeared. God who came in and out of Paradise was a sedate personage in a long white beard and a triple crown. Satan was dark complexioned, dressed in green, and had hoofs and a tail. He also possessed a sense of humour, that seemed totally lacking in the Deity.

There was no back to the stage and you saw all the figures silhouetted against the clear light of a summer's day and the rococo front of the church. The mystery was a celebrated one in its time and still stands out among its fellows for literary merit and dramatic worth. We did not have the whole of it, but just the complete part of "*The Fall*." And I have not even yet forgotten the dramatic effect of the devil coming to Adam and Eve asleep after the fatigue of their first day's work outside

Eden, and carefully planting thistles for them to find in their field next morning. The malicious humour of him sent up a roar of laughter from the crowded square.

That was what made the play so wonderful, the audience was part of it. I was wedged in beside a workman in an overall with a little boy, and a young man in a seedy black coat. They were all intensely interested, accepting this strange form of drama as though they had known it from childhood. There was no doubt whatever that to the Paris crowd it came with understanding, with vitality. It was not a dead thing, an archaeological mummy, but an appreciable form of art. Moreover, they frankly enjoyed it.

When the white-bearded, triple-crowned Deity came out of his white stucco portico, they were quick to seize his significance. A moment's hesitation perhaps and then the cry of:

"Tiens, c'est le Bon Dieu."

And the small boy at my side cried out:

"Papa, papa, let me see le Bon Dieu. Je n'ai jamais vu." And was promptly lifted up.

"Why has he three crowns?" he asked.

Papa seemed doubtful, but the young man in the seedy black removed a cigarette from his mouth and answered:

"Three crowns, three kingdoms. Heaven, Earth, and Hell."

The small boy was watching with all his eyes.

"Je n'aurai jamais plus peur," he announced as God retired into his stucco Paradise. "He is too old, le Bon Dieu."

"Beaucoup," said the young man in seedy black with a heavy irony. "In the twentieth century, senile."

But for all that he was as interested in the play as any one.

When the greeny-black devil appeared with his hoofs,

his tail, and his malicious smile, there was an instantaneous shout:

"Le diable. Mais vois donc, c'est le diable. O qu'il est fin."

Adam and Eve were much less enthusiastically received. The crowd was not prepared to accept them as fairly representative of humanity apparently, that is to say, of themselves. The usual gibes at feminine curiosity were freely made, but also, unexpectedly, sarcastic comments on Adam's weakness and vacillation.

"Mon Dieu, quelle femmelette," said my friend in the seedy black coat contemptuously, with utter disregard of the topsy-turvyness of his epithet.

The workman in the blouse was pondering.

"If one began like that," he said slowly, "who wonders one is no better to-day? Le Bon Dieu aurait dû nous faire un peu plus honnête homme que ça."

But the small boy on the tip-toe of excitement was heart and soul in the drama. True heir of the Middle Ages he took it as a combination of history and pantomime. "Regarde, papa, regarde. Le Bon Dieu se fâche. On va les chasser."

Then as Adam and Eve walked off to the other side of the stage to represent the expulsion from Eden:

"Will he come now, the devil, and take them?"

"Not yet, sonny," said the man in the seedy black coat, "not yet. D'abord le travail, ensuite le diable. C'est comme ça la vie, n'est-ce pas, mon vieux?"

But the crowd was too eagerly following the trials of Adam and Eve to philosophise. And when they fell asleep after their first day's digging, and the devil hopped up to plant thistles in the field, a great roar of laughter went up from every one. It was a jest they could all appreciate. And the intelligence, the "slimness" of the "great Adversary" excited their ungrudging admiration.

"Il les a bien joués," was the general opinion. And the theological conclusion of the play with its promise of salvation came rather in the nature of an anticlimax, until the crowd, perhaps remembering that as they were Adam it was as well for man to win after all, duly applauded.

"Tu sais, papa," said the small boy as he got down from his father's shoulder. "Le Bon Dieu. He is really too old. C'est si dommage pour le monde."

"And the devil so slim," said the young man in the seedy coat, "and man so weak, alors que voulez-vous?"

"Ce que je veux," said the man in the blouse, who had now his *idée fixe*. "What I want, I, c'est qu'on nous ait fait un peu plus honnête homme que ça."

The farce which followed was in essence as topical as though it had been written by the Anti-Suffrage Society for production to-morrow. (Incidentally I commend it to their notice as supplying them with a little conscious humour to add to their small and largely unconscious store.) It was the thesis founded on the street corner jibe, "Go home and mind the baby."

Jeannot was a hen-pecked husband. Each morning Jeannette, his emancipated wife, gave him a long list of household duties to perform while she went off to attend the woman's rights meetings of the time. There was the baby to mind, there were fires to tend, rooms to sweep, etc. Jeannette, however, appeared still to have done the washing, for the "clou" of the farce is that in wringing a sheet with the aid of her husband (and quarrelling with him about his mother-in-law), he lets go accidentally, and she falls into the huge open copper where the water is heating. Utter consternation for a moment. Instinctive obedience to Jeannette's order to help her out. And then Jeannot sees his advantage, and starts bargaining.

Will she do his little list of household duties? which he produces and reads all through.

No, she won't.

Very well then, she may stay there. The worm has turned. . . . After quite an amusing scene Jeannette gives in, and Jeannot rescues her from the copper a changed and submissive wife. And the play ends as she starts on the first of the "little list," while Jeannot goes off to the mediaeval club of his day.

The farce, so topical in its ancient dress, was extremely well acted, and was received with great applause.

"Ah, les femmes, les femmes," said the man in the seedy coat. "Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose."

But the man in the blouse was pondering.

"If it was like that too so long ago," he said, struggling with his thought, "it seems to me it isn't the sex but the person which makes the difference."

"Féministe," retorted the young man in seedy black.

"Papa, papa, j'aime ça," cried the small boy, "only I wish they had both fallen in."

And then the play being finished the crowd loosened.

For a long while it stayed drifting idly round the square, examining the empty stage, remarking on the plays, and showing that general intellectual curiosity which is such a feature of the Paris crowd. The people in the roped-off enclosure went away more quickly. They were largely professors, and their wives or belongings, and people connected with the University and educational world. Some of them had looked politely bored, but the crowd had not had a dull moment from start to finish. The mediaeval mystery play could still hold them.

The students scored an unqualified success, but they never in my time attempted to repeat it. And the only other time when I saw them drawing crowds in Paris was after a disturbance among the sober medical students

the origin of which I never learnt, but which the rowdy legal undergrads instantly took hold of; and for two days the "Boul' Miche" swarmed with students in bérêts of all the faculties, and there was much shouting, marching, and demonstrating, mild in deed if violent in expression, to the accompaniment of a crowd of interested street boys and amused adults.

As far as I could see the only thing which was actually done was to wear the classic bérêt and to walk about in bands, which obstructed the traffic, and to shout. As the authorities had the sense to take as little notice as possible, the whole thing snuffed out. Meanwhile the medicals had settled their own differences themselves.

At least four times I heard of lecturers in the Faculté de Droit rising in their wrath like Monsieur La Gourmet with a "Je lève la séance." But happening in the Law nobody took much notice. It was simply one of the characteristics of Law.

The great meeting places of the students are the cafés in the Boul' Miche, near the Sorbonne, of which the Café d'Harcourt has (or had then) pre-eminence. And also in the top corner of the "Lux" near the Odéon, though these seemed mostly students "pour rire," such ties and trousers never appearing in any of the University classrooms. In the cafés it was different. Here were genuine students, whether the best or the worst, or simply the average in between. And there were so many of them that even out of the enormous mass of French students an average of some kind they must have represented. And in the cafés the students did, from the English point of view, nothing. They talked. A certain amount of drinking, from absinthe to coffee. A certain amount of eating. A few games, cards, draughts, dominoes, the Café d'Harcourt had even a *billard* of the small continental variety. But it was a minimum of everything else to an overwhelming maximum of talking.

This was the first thing one noticed, or to be accurate the second. The first was more apparent, more disconcerting, even more fundamentally opposed to our ways of thinking. It lay in the number, the frequency, the undisguised openness of the cafés' feminine "clientèle." There was nothing furtive, nothing secret about them, or about any one else in relation to them, students, café employees, or passers-by. They were there at all hours of the day, behaving very much like everybody else, quite as undisturbedly assured of themselves and their place in the world, if they ever thought about such things, as ever a collection of curates could be. Or rather they never thought about it at all, they accepted it, as the world accepted it. "C'est comme ça."

It was all so simple, so matter-of-fact, so ordinary. And they too were so matter-of-fact, so ordinary, so just like everybody else. That was the most astonishing part of the whole astonishing business. And one was forced to consider how far a virtuous public opinion can make the culprit more vicious. If shame is the beginning of virtue it is often also the cause of much that is worst in vice. It seems to lie like a step across the path of progress leading both up and down. It comes as a two-edged sword slaying sin on one side and self-respect on the other. No one could look at these girls going in and out without realising that.

Not that one must mistake their place in the social order. Their life now would not prevent a number of them from becoming respectable members of society later on—not very much more than it would prevent the students themselves—the logic of the French mind perhaps forcing it to extend something of the easy judgment everywhere accorded to the man to his inevitable co-partner. Not quite the same judgment of course, in a man-made world that would be impossible, but one that much more nearly approaches it than with us.

Starting with the assumption that human nature is so, that male human nature is assuredly, practically, inevitably so, the French admit it, provide for it, allow for it, and are in consequence less unjust and less cruel to the woman made necessary by this view than we who have it and deny it, pretend it isn't, and then visit our outraged feelings, when we can pretend no longer, entirely on the "outcast." While man was undisputed king of the world, and his needs demanded the annual sacrifice body and soul of millions of women, why not? One could only argue over the "need." It was ungenerous perhaps to add contumely to the sacrifice, though it swelled his pride in the possession of respectable wives and daughters, unjust and how ungenerous! But let the point of view shift, as it is shifting, question the undisputed kingship, admit woman's equal right as a human being, and man's needs become his own problem, just as a propensity to stealing or fighting would. Centuries of pampering have no doubt made his problem difficult to deal with, the more reason for beginning quickly, but it is his problem. Let us recognise that, and when we are told about "needs" and "health" let us frankly say so.

These girls in the "Boul' Miche" cafés were not, it struck me, trading in themselves. Rather it seemed youth and the desire for life and pleasure which brought them there, just exactly as it brought the men, with the difference that for them the alternative was not different pleasures, but none, and the hard, monotonous, grinding life of the workshop to fill to exhaustion their waking hours. Neither thought much the worse of themselves or of each other in consequence. And the comment of the passer-by was practically, "Mais c'est tout naturel. La jeunesse s'amuse."

To me, an unsophisticated, well brought-up young person who always knows so much more, though she knows it irrelevantly, incoherently, and entirely dis-

proportionately, than her elders imagine, the cafés of the "Boul' Miche" gave much to think about. And when I was recovering from the first recoil, and getting things a little into perspective, French perspective, I realised another astounding fact.

Exactly opposite the Café d'Harcourt, on the other side of the Boul' Miche, stands the Lycée d'Harcourt or Lycée St. Louis. It is true the boys' school has a high wall, a large porte cochère, just like a convent, but it is a school, a school of some 500 boys, some of whom pass in and out daily, all of whom pass in and out at least several times a week. Imagine Harrow at Piccadilly Circus. And the devoted mothers of young boys, of growing-up boys (and French mothers are very devoted), allowing their sons daily to go up and down, and in and out. Although even that is not a parallel.

I have sometimes wondered whether the Roman Catholic faith with its emphasis on the deed committed, and the relative unimportance of the thought and feeling, explains this indifference to influences and states of mind in France. There is nearly always something much more positive and clear cut in the French values of things, with generally so much more stress on the thing done, and so much less stress on all that nebulous hinterland of environment and influences which pushes one to action.

Anyhow, there stands the Lycée d'Harcourt opposite the café of its name. And there or thereabouts it has stood down the ages. For the Lycée d'Harcourt is the direct descendant of the original colleges which once made up the University, colleges whose students were entered at fourteen as they once were at Oxford and Cambridge. Oxford and Cambridge have kept their colleges, but altered their students; Paris as a University has lost its colleges because it still keeps them for their original scholars.

This is the historic reason why the Lycée St. Louis

finds itself where it is, but only the co-operation of the French parent can keep it there. And when one understands the stringency of the regulations of a French lycée, the little liberty, the eternal supervision, the care with which parents and teachers try apparently to keep the boys as innocent in its accepted meaning as the "jeune fille" herself, it makes the position all the more puzzling. . . . To me it is still a stumbling block.

Once this carefully guarded boy has left school he goes across the road to the café opposite, and I do not think it is too much to say that public opinion expects him to do it. One even hears tales of thoughtful fathers choosing the studies, the rooms, and the mistress for their sons all at the same time. Perhaps it is just the acceptance of the thing as necessary or at least as inevitable that accounts both for the stringent discipline of the lycées, where no boy is trusted or left for two minutes at a time, is watched at work, at play, in his sleep even, and also for the entire liberty of the University where there is no supervision at all. As if one said:

"It's inevitable. Leave the boy licence then as a student, but at least see by supervision and regulation that before then he is safe."

Public opinion benevolently tolerates immorality in the young man and demands a traditional innocence up to then. The same point of view, modified of course in certain respects, prevails with regard to women where marriage is the dividing line.

In those days cycling was still a craze and Frenchwomen cycled on men's machines in "culottes." This costume with or without, generally without, the bicycle was extensively adopted by the girls of the cafés, and "chasseurs d'Afrique" knickers in all varieties of colour and checks were "le dernier cri." Quite possibly it was just this fact which has since caused the introduction of the British type of ladies' machine into France, where

it is now ridden by most of the women and all the priests, debarred before by express command from cycling owing to the necessity of preserving the proprieties of the "soutane." But beyond posing in "culottes," forming rather loud talking groups in the cafés or on the pavements, the "convenances" were rarely infringed.

Only there was always just that element of uncertainty. I have seen the apparently innocent passer-by suddenly, and for no obvious reason, become the target for all manner of loud-voiced and uncomfortable jests, even equally suddenly and without reason surrounded by a ring of café habitués of both sexes and sometimes escorted in this manner halfway along the boulevard. One never quite knew. So much loose force and energy were lying all round and any untoward spark might fire them.

The Bal Bullier, at the top of the Boul' Miche near the Observatoire, provides dances for this café clientèle three times a week, and in summer parties go and dine out at most of the little restaurants scattered over what may be called the suburban country near Paris, especially at Sceaux-Robinson, a great student resort, where you can eat at tables on platforms fixed in the branches of trees. Hence its name.¹

Sometimes the professors invite the students to their own houses. This is kind of them and helpful to the student, but as an outlet for the life and energy of twenty entirely inadequate. So the student gets his main amusement in the "Lux," in the streets, and in the cafés, if he does not get it in less desirable places. And he is flung out into all this after the careful, the astonishingly minute restraint of the lycées. In a number of cases he

¹ Perhaps the lack of authorised social life for the students cannot be better illustrated than by the remark of the vicerector himself in his book on the University. "To meet one another it is not really necessary for students to frequent the Bal Bullier," he says, but suggests no other place, and does not pursue the subject.

may still remain at home while attending the University, but not to anything like the extent of the thousands of students inscribed on the University books.

And through it all, if not in it all, passing by the cafés, going down the streets, in and out of the University are the little seminarists, the young unhatched priestlets, little more than boys, who are taking their Licence like the other students at the Sorbonne. Not all seminarists come to the Sorbonne, they have their own colleges, but some do, enough to form a little group apart in many of the classes. They usually worked hard and did well in the "Cours fermés," where the obvious anti-clerical bias of some of the professors lent a piquancy to the situation.

The outstanding figure among the students of our time, in the Licence-ès-lettres anyhow, the most picturesque, the most impressive, was the "King of Dahomey." I haven't the least proof he was a king or came from Dahomey, probably not, but he looked like a king and he was certainly negroid, so the name seemed appropriate.

He stood six feet high, had black crinkled hair, thick lips, a brown-black skin, and a superb physique. Even cramped inside the absurd and exasperating swathings of modern European clothes, the lines of his body were a delight to the eye; more, they were alive. They had what no "civilised" race seems any longer to possess, the quiver of life in repose which is like the play of sunlight over water. He was intelligent, alert, and extraordinarily strong. I saw him once, good-humouredly, take up two students who were ragging him, one in each hand, give them a good shake, much as a child might give its doll, and put them down again. And I wondered what short of a bullet could stop him if he were in earnest instead of play. He was pretty regular in his "Cours fermés" attendances, and I often passed him, the centre of an admiring crowd, in the cafés.

And I wondered, I wonder still, what happened after?

Has he gone back to the court of Dahomey, or wherever he came from? And what effect had a course of French cafés and the Grand Siècle literature upon his mental growth?

I have never forgotten him. He came to me then a living doubt, the first, as to the pre-ordained superiority of the white races, and an ever-present reminder of what civilised man had certainly lost. It was the juxtaposition of events, I suppose, the seeing him in the morning and hearing Monsieur Crozier in the afternoon, that gave and still gives the Homeric heroes, unless I watch myself carefully, the crinkled black hair, thick lips, brown-black skins, and the superb physique with its quiver of life like sunshine on flowing water of the King of Dahomey. Only they boast too much. And the odd part is that when I see them that way they are so much more alive, and so much less unpleasant, than as the traditional, golden-curled, blue-eyed, white-skinned, god-like heroes.

It was the King of Dahomey, too, who first stretched for me the meaning of the word man to cover really something more than Englishman or Frenchman. Here was he with his crinkled black hair, brown-black skin, and thick lips, very much a man, an intelligent man, even an aristocratic man, who had the indefinable thing "race" written all over him; a man to whose making long generations of cultivated forebears must have gone, and neither English nor French, nor white, nor European. Man then, and man as distinct from "savages," meant more than this. When one realises a platitude of such dimensions for the first time, its effect is staggering.

As a whole the French student strikes one as more grown-up, more mature, and much more intelligent than the English undergrad; and quicker, more man-of-the-world than the German; more able to draw amusement

out of himself, if more open in his sins, which he takes gaily, than either; without, too, any touch of the devastating sentimentality of the German which is so naïve and so treacly. In Germany the inkhole of my seat in class and the pockets of my coat (which one takes off and hangs up outside) were always full of little notes, from poetry, bad, to childlike requests to be allowed to "avanciren auf die erste Reihe" in order to sit by my side. No attempts were ever made in Paris to launch billets-doux into my pockets, and an atmosphere of severe respect which took no notice of such incidents as sex pervaded the inside of the classrooms and all the students with whom I came in contact.

And if I sometimes saw these same students afterwards part of the very different atmosphere of the cafés it served to bring home to me the accepted conclusions, so ably voiced by Lecky, as to the absolute necessity of the one type of woman in order to preserve the virtue of the other . . . of me in fact. And it sowed, too, maybe unconsciously, the first seeds of revolt against the whole appalling belief on which this theory and its practice rests. For with the twentieth century has come the beginning of that solidarity among women which in the future must so alter all the earth.

PART IV

SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

CONSCIENCE is an uncertain waker. And on Sunday mine slept, doubtfully perhaps towards morning, but slept, and neither the bang of the milk bottle against the front door, the scrape of the bread, nor even the stage-thundrous rattle of the iron shutters of the bread shop opposite (which opens in France by statute on Sundays as on week days) got me up. I slept, consequently Richard slept, in dreamless peace and comfort, until I gently woke. It might be ten in the morning, it might be eleven, it might be later. This was an interesting matter of speculation when one did wake.

Of course there was just the same housework to do on Sunday morning as on any other day except we hardly ever lit the Pentagon stove, and I had the kitchen to clean. I did this first thing before even I woke Richard, and it took some time. The stove had to be raked out and cleaned up, the three feet of tiled floor washed over with soft soap, the saucepans and other kitchen tools cleaned.

But all the same on Sundays we revelled, and loitered, and hugged the fact it was ten or twelve in the morning. And then elegantly attired (a clean collar perhaps, and a special tie) we sat down generally to a composite breakfast and lunch meal that always tasted particularly delicious. It began with hot drinks like a breakfast, and went on to solid foods like a lunch, and was thoroughly untraditional and experimental in every way. And we didn't wash up after, not immediately after that is, but played we were people of leisure and

domestics (though we did have to clear away ourselves) who have no connection with such things, but ample time and opportunity to take their pleasure.

Every Sunday we took ours; in winter in Paris itself, in its museums, picture galleries, churches, concerts, theatres, in its streets and boulevards and public places; in summer in its pleasant semi-country surroundings, on its river, in its parks. I think we saw our guide book through from cover to cover, all that interested us anyway, and plenty that found no place in guide books at all and was none the less absorbing and interesting. The miles and miles of stony steps we have taken over Paris pavés, the long wandering down forgotten streets, the hours of searching through strange thoroughfares to recover some lost literary allusion, or to visualise some historic reference, all of which gave us not only the thing we went to see, but a pressed down measure overflowing of Paris in its kaleidoscopic variety.

It was at a period, too, when time was long. Not so long as in childhood, but still comfortably long, when a whole afternoon, from one to five perhaps, possibly from twelve to six, had a spaciousness now gone for ever. Is the difference merely relative I wonder, only the effect of having put so much more time behind that last piece that it shrinks in size? Or is there really something actual after all, and the fresh intensity of living put into time makes it longer? Who knows?

Those afternoons were long then, now they seem made of a spacious plenteousness of time since vanished from the world. And the slow dawdling of the getting up, with so much talk, and laughter, and teasings, and kissing drawing brackets round the dressing and the housework as to turn them into mere breath intervals in a triumphant holiday song of joy and love.

Sense is the expression of things understood by the intellect, and there is a nonsense which transcends it as

there is one which falls short of it, a nonsense only deep-stirred feelings know. And this joyous bubbling nonsense which springs so naturally where youth and love have met is wiser than it seems. It fertilises sense. This happy foolish nonsense which ran like a golden thread through all our working days gathered itself up into shining knots of splendour every Sunday and studded all the pattern of our lives. Sheer unmitigated nonsense, dear, delightful! The inadequate efforts of sense to express what lies beneath the wisdom of the ages, and is the meaning of life itself. If Age finds wisdom, Youth very often has it, and the succeeding years but bring it to the light or bury it for ever.

On Sundays we talked nonsense then undisturbed; and there is a halo round those Sundays no sensible ones possess.

There is in France a special Sunday air, as distinct as the English from that of week days, but very different in its qualities. In France the Sunday atmosphere is one of innocent domestic fun, of family outings. Every one wakes up and says:

"It's Sunday, how shall we enjoy ourselves to-day?"

And the expectation of enjoyment gets into the air and helps to produce it. To be "endimanché" is not only to be clothed in one's Sunday best, but to have an air of festivity as well. Sunday is a festival. "Dimanches et Fêtes," as all the closed shopfronts tell you. Not only a Church festival, but a day when it is right to give oneself to enjoyment, as on other days one gives oneself to work. You may begin with High Mass which puts God on your side, and, leaving you at peace with the other world, helps to the frank enjoyment of this. And should not communion with the Creator aid in the better enjoyment of the things of His creating, and the frank enjoyment of His creation help to the understanding of the Maker? The Roman Catholic Church has always

divided Sunday between the pleasures of this and of the other life, and all over Paris every Sunday there hangs a pervading atmosphere of gay domestic enjoyment, light as air, made of trifles but as pervading and as real.

On Sundays the top floor flats in the houses on the opposite side of the boulevard (the sixth was really a fourth for they were of older growth and have since been pulled down) always had their windows opened with a bang, and in one of them, the one we could see best, which had an attic window and a sloping ceiling, every Sunday a young girl would hang her looking glass up on the wall by the window's side to get a better light for the final touches of her "costume de fête." Then the family one after the other, a mother, father, and two other children, would also take a look. We could not hear, but we could quite well follow the gay talk and laughter which went on between the person visible at the glass and the more or less invisible occupants of the room.

After much thought we decided the room was a kitchen, a kitchen-sitting room (somebody probably slept there too), and that the other rooms of the flat, however few they were, faced another way, for none of the family ever appeared at any of the other windows. On Sundays the daughter would sometimes spend quite a long while looking down into the street, and making remarks over her shoulder; and "maman" would sometimes come to join her with a spoon in her hand and look too. And then indistinctly we could see a table drawn up and laid in the room and the family at déjeuner; to be followed almost always by a rush of all the members to the looking glass, where mother brushed "papa's" coat, and the daughter, having fixed the great matter of her own hat, settled "maman's," while "papa" assisted with advice. And then when every

one was quite ready, and every one had examined every other one, the windows would suddenly shut to with a bang, and the play for us was finished.

It was strange how across the immense width of the boulevard the light-hearted gaiety of that family came so unmistakably to us—the Sunday Paris gaiety of a very “bourgeoise” family of the “très petite bourgeoisie.” They stayed there all our time, and every Sunday saw the window opened and the looking glass and the daughter appear. On other days if the window was opened no one was to be seen, except in summer, when far on into the evening the family “took the air” there, but quite subduedly, as weary with a long day’s work. The gaiety belonged to Sunday.

It belongs more especially to the afternoon of Sunday. Offices are shut all day Sunday, but shops are frequently open up to twelve o’clock: the bread shop by statute all day long. And little shops run by their own proprietors please themselves. Large establishments do not as a rule open at all. Restaurants are all open as a matter of course, and indeed give their best meals and get their best custom on Sundays. All museums, picture galleries, public monuments, with theatres, concerts, and places of entertainment, are not only open but cater especially for Sundays, the recognisedly right and proper day on which to enjoy oneself. Sunday has all the rights of Saturday with us, besides an added something of its own.

And it needs to have, for the French working week is not one of five and a half days, but of a full six, even sometimes of six and a half. One of the objects of French trade unionism is to accomplish what is called “la semaine anglaise.”

So in France Sunday morning is divided between work and Church, the afternoon and evening are given to enjoyment;—rarely the enjoyment of stopping at home;

nearly every one goes out, if it is only on to the pavement in front of the house, or to the boulevard seat round the corner. And many, how many one needs to live there to understand, really go out to recognised places of enjoyment. The national habit has obtained the necessary facilities for indulging it. There are more trains, more trams, more 'buses, on Sundays than on week days. Fares are frequently cheaper. Admissions to galleries or entertainments are often half-price or even free. The national life has provided for the national needs, and the national need on Sundays is to "s'amuser un peu."

Nothing I think is more typically French than its Sunday crowds, its bourgeois, its working-class crowds, where father, mother, and babies, often grandfather and grandmother too, all enjoy themselves together. And the enjoyment is frequently so simple: a walk on the boulevards or in the park, or a tram ride out of Paris, a steam-boat up the river, an hour in the Invalides to see Napoleon's tomb (still very popular), or the pictures in the Luxembourg, with perhaps the greater joy of dining at a restaurant after at 1.25 (1s. 0½d.) a head, children half-price, or merely for the cost of what is called "couvert," meaning knife, forks, spoons, plates, and serviette, 25c. or 2½d., and you feed the child out of your own portion.

Our budget did not allow us to dine in restaurants often, but we shared every Sunday in the other pleasures of the Paris Sabbath maker. When one has to take one's pleasures economically, always with an eye on the extra sou, one learns many things. The tram which takes you farthest into the country for the least money, the museums which are comfortably warmed in winter, all the free times at the otherwise paying places, the cheapest seats everywhere, and the cheapest way of getting them, and a great deal more of that local lore of the very hard-up. We learnt it in Paris in a way never

to forget it again, and although Time brings many changes, and the Métro has altered modes of motion, I think I could still undertake to get more value for least money in Paris than I could anywhere else.

And they were good those Sundays, pure good! Moved by the very spirit of joy, enwrapped in the atmosphere of a fête, holy day, and holiday. When I think them over now they shine like beads on a rosary of joy, crystal clear, and full of changing radiating colour, but each its own, and all alike beautiful.

First there come the days among the Grecian sculpture at the Louvre. Pearls upon the rosary, when we could sit still before the stillness of the white statue of Milo, or yet more still before the rushing sweep of the winged Victory of Samothrace, or would wander among the lesser deities, and the athletes and the heroes would absorb Richard's attention. And I learnt about strength muscles, and weight muscles, and speed muscles from one who knew these things practically in his life. And the point Richard always came back to was that the Greek athletes and heroes whatever they were doing were trained all over, normal healthy bodies just keyed up as it were so many notes above the average, never over-muscularly developed in one place at the expense of another; the Runners with good arms, the Throwers with good legs, no one, with the possible exception of a Hercules, a mere mass of sinew. A specialist among the arts always throws you a fresh light upon them, and here was certainly one which the rather tiresome rows of Greek athletic statues had never had for me before.

Then there were the Sunday mornings among the pictures, rich ruby red Sundays, ablaze with many colours, the opals on the string, when we found ourselves wandering, at first bewildered, from Primitives to Eclectics, from Italy to Spain and Holland or to modern France; till more and more with a wide love for

nearly all of them I found myself with a passion for the Dutch on one side and the Pre-Raphaelites on the other growing within my soul.

How good those Sundays were. So good that in the second winter most of our Sundays were spent at the Louvre. We would get down there after our composite breakfast just when the morning crowd was thinning, and stay there until the afternoon one began to get thick, and in this way we seemed to have it really to ourselves.

We always walked there of course; by the rue Vavin, the rue Bréa, then round the Luxembourg and down the rue Bonaparte to the square of St. Sulpice. Here we made a little halt to look at the flower sellers, or at the coloured plaster saints in the church shops, or to watch the odd little one-horse canvas-covered tram—we actually saw the last one set off on its final journey to Auteuil—or we sat on a seat and looked at the fountains and the lions of Visconti; or watched the crowd coming out of church, or the little seminarists going into their high-walled asylum. Then along the Boulevard St.-Germain to the rue des Saints Pères (because it was less noisy than the others and I liked its name) and so out to the Quai Voltaire and over the Pont du Carrousel into the Louvre.

In the Sunday crowd of the Louvre we were always struck by the number of workmen; and of the places which we haunted that they haunted the pictures and the collections of French faience, of glass and of enamel ware seemed the most popular. From their remarks they were often of the trade themselves, though from house painters to picture painters there is a wide difference. These painters however seemed more conscious of the kinship. I remember once hearing a group of them discussing the colours of some Luini frescoes in relation to a big building they were engaged in decorating. The craftsman of France seems to take far more interest in

art than his English brother, perhaps because the divorce between art and craft is less complete. The very vocabulary shows it. There is no foothold here for "artistic" products,—surely the most pathetic betrayal that even commercial man cannot live by trade alone.

In the late morning too came the professional coteries. It is the proper thing, or was then, among certain sets in the professional world to look into the Louvre before Sunday déjeuner. And these sets would make, or follow, a fashion of admiring, say, Early Umbrians, or of ridiculing Ingres, which would be extensively followed for a season and then give way to a vogue for the Sienese or the Bolognese School, and the sudden discovery that Ary Scheffer was not absolute perfection. We used to hear a good deal of art talk in this manner, and must in two years have lived through at least four rapid exaltations and as many abrupt descents.

From about twelve to two the galleries would be left to a few enthusiasts and the ever-present drifting body of the outcasts who come for warmth and shelter. By three they were full again and from then till four are crowded with a family Sunday crowd who come as part of the Sunday outing and seem really to enjoy what they see. Family groups would stand before Murillo's Madonna and admire the cherubic babies. Principally they sought the French schools. The Salon Carré was of course always full. It is still, though then there was a magnet in the room which drew the Paris crowd with a surer touch even than it would have drawn a crowd elsewhere.

Born in Italy, the work of an Italian, for Italians, of an Italian, Monna Lisa, in the subtlety of her charm, the something so uncertain, in the very puzzle of her thin-lipped smile, has in her more of Paris than I have ever seen elsewhere. And yet not all, for underneath that haunting, drawing charm to me a soul of evil dwells, while the heart of Paris beneath its many wrappings is

never evil, is always too gaily brave for ought but good. But Paris very specially felt the charm, and felt the smile of Monna Lisa was in a peculiar sense its own, felt too of all the pictures in its galleries, in this one, not French at all in origin or inspiration, it possessed part of its very self. Now Monna Lisa hangs again in the Louvre and Paris has recovered the subtlest portrait of itself.

We generally left the Louvre before the Sunday crowd grew thick, and for an hour or more while daylight lasted we wandered up and down the quays, the Booksellers' Row of Paris.

The Paris quays extend for miles, and for many of those miles on both sides the river the ingenious coster has set up his shop. A desk-like box, higher behind than in front and with a lid which can at night be shut down and locked, is fastened by iron clamps to the top of the stone parapet, and filled with second-hand books, prints, music, medals, even with "objets d'art," such as small statuettes or glass vases, sometimes even with bits of old brass work, shells, and other miscellaneous produce. But books predominate, second-hand books, sometimes quite swagger, well-bound editions running into francs, but more usually paper-covered, mixed heaps, of books, thrown together in their boxes according to price. All here twopence, or threepence, or sixpence as the case may be, and torn, dirty, coverless popular novels will lie side by side with well-bound, perfectly clean, even uncut scientific or literary works that because they are foreign, or for some other reason, have had no sale.

To wander along the quays was an absorbing occupation, not only for the sake of the joy of the find when it came, but to me for the queer little bits of reading that I got by the way. Passionate scenes from forgotten novels, three verses of a poem, quaint little bits from books that only figure in histories of literature, odd facts from all the sciences, excerpts from school class-books, and amid

the drab of text-books, the sudden colour of a page from the "Félibres," the modern writers of the modern "langue d'oc," redolent with the sunshine and the scents of the "midi," which I would have to spell out slowly as a strange new tongue.

And all the while the curve of the river, between the long grey quays, the dark dome of the Institute, the towers of Notre Dame in their human strength, the sharpened point of the Cité beyond its green trees where like a breakwater it runs out far into the river, the round extinguisher towers of the Conciergerie; or perhaps the wonderful eastern end of the island, with, as the French say, the "ship" of the church thrust out a very prow upon the water, the needle steeple of the Sainte Chapelle, the great decorated mass of the Louvre, the "grand siècle" in stone, the trees of the Tuileries; all the sights of Paris making pictures as I read.

And the varied humanity of the quays, the loiterers by the boxes, students, artists, cranks, the failures and the idealists, differing in every way, but bound by the common bond of hard-upness; the hoarse-voiced seller always out of elbows, generally engaged in vociferous argument with a friend in the roadway; sometimes I hear prepared to produce indecent books and pictures from the back of innocent-looking boxes for likely customers.

Always there were people round the boxes, for they seemed to draw like a magnet certain elements from the passing crowd:—no matter whether that crowd was the comparatively well dressed one of the Quai Malaquais, or the commercial jostle of the Mégisserie, or the shabby, half-furtive passer-by of the quays above the island, the open boxes on the parapets with their tumbled heaps of discoloured books drew them, drew them always. And it drew us.

How many hours we have spent wandering happily

down the quays intent on turning over and over the discarded books of others' libraries, in search of what we wanted and could at all afford for our own. And all the time, unconsciously, the silhouettes of riverside Paris were sinking deep within our brains, the qualities of its wide boulevard quays, the sound of its traffic on the bridges. The quays drew us from the most unlikely quarters, so drew us that we learnt to avoid them of set purpose going out for fear we should never get away from them. So drew us that coming back, however tired or hungry or late, we would agree to stop "just a minute" and awake presently to find it was an hour. We had the University library for serious planned-out reading, but sometimes I wonder if I have not got as much, in breadth anyway, from these desultory, interrupted, bee-like settlings among the book boxes of the quays. I got acquainted with such an immense variety of authors and such an extended miscellany of facts.

Richard wandered on the quays without me sometimes, for he delighted on those days which would come when the general accumulation of going on doing it had laid me flat on my back on the sofa in the Pentagon, to produce a fascinating (if coverless) book from a secret hiding place and give it me to read. I read most of Daudet this way, Daudet whom I adore. Luckily being "démodé" for the moment, Daudet, very battered, was procurable at small cost on the quays. No covers, broken bindings, creased and dirty pages, these could not dim the humour of the *Elixir du Révérend Père Gaucher* or the pathos of the finish of *Les Rois en Exil*, but when in the middle of an inimitable scene two pages were missing, then, if at no other time, I envied the millionaires who could afford to buy new copies or join a circulating library.

Sometimes on warm winter Sundays we would wander

over Paris even to the docks of the Bassin de la Villette, a grim, grimy East End quarter, where the loaded barges of the canals take the place of ocean steamers, and give one an idea of the enormous commerce carried on along the inland waterways of France. And here, too, we caught a glimpse among the mean streets of the quarter of the hardening which poverty brings to the light-hearted gaiety of France, the toughening of its fibres into a reckless inhuman dare-devilry, into the stuff of which the Apaches are made. But with it all never the slatterny squalor of our slums, never the untidy-headed, draggle-skirted women in curlers and cloth caps, or the slovenly pimple-faced men like chunks of raw meat, beings crushed by animal needs back into animals again. These amid all their poverty kept a neatness, a dressedness of appearance, that told of a certain care and dexterity. They were not crushed back into animals, but hardened, dehumanised into what we call, creating them, fiends. Though both of us under grinding poverty can lose, as it were, our humanity, the French still keep their intelligence. It was this glimpse, this perception from a glimpse, caught as we went through the back quarters of Paris, of a perverted intelligence, not brutalisation, but dehumanisation, which showed us what gives their special character to the Paris slums . . . and, as I afterward reflected, continues the many excesses of the Renaissance, not their worse ones, down to our day. The Apaches of Paris, indeed, would have passed unnoticed among the gentry of the court of the Borgias, for they are of the same kidney. Then, too, I began to understand the guillotine crowds of the Terror, and the grisly history of the September massacres.

All round this region of the north-east there is black poverty, with its inevitable attendant crime; as round the quarter of the Marais there is the dreariness of the not enough, of that thrifty hard-featured pathos

of the respectable poor, enhanced here by the decayed splendour of its setting.

This quarter has its old hotels connected with all the great names of France (among them that of Madame de Sévigné), its arcaded Place des Vosges, once Place Royale, the most spacious square in the English sense in Paris, so large because it once formed the court of a royal palace, pulled down after Henri II. met his death in a tournament there. The square itself was built under the great Henri IV., and the lofty brick and stone houses with their wide arcaded fronts, all set round the garden in the centre, turn it almost from a square into a cloister.

The Place Royale, the scene of Corneille's comedy of that name, was once the Park Lane of Paris. It still has an air of infinite dignity. It sheltered the *Précieuses*; and is, in spite of the innumerable tenants, a family for almost each room of its old houses, of spacious calm. Victor Hugo in a dramatic burst of mediaevalism once elected to live here and brought his curious "*ménage à trois*," where all played their appointed parts of impeccable genius, adoring wife, and devoted friend, each knowing it was a part, with realistic touches of convincing fervour. Here Madame de Sévigné was born, and here the aristocrats of France resided. While just round the corner conveniently for its inhabitants stood the Bastille.

Once on a fête day we climbed the bronze column which stands on the place de la Bastille. The column was put up, not in memory of the Bastille itself, but of the heroes of the Revolution of July 1830, whose names in gold lettering figure on its fluted sides. Its 150 feet (Victor Hugo called it a stove pipe) are divided by sculptured lions' heads into five parts. Inside it is very dark, for the only light (and air) comes through the open mouths of the lions.

We climbed up these dark stairs where the faint light from one set of lions faded away into dead blackness long before the next was even a twilight glimmer on the twisting stairway. Richard was on ahead. I am slower up 278 steps than he is. I noticed no sound of any one behind me as I groped my way, feeling with my feet for the stairs. Then in the darkest middle of the column, I suddenly felt a stealthy hand come creeping round my leg above the ankle. It clung, and it crept . . . up. Fear, shot with a flash of blind fury, ran through me. I kicked, striking sharply with the other foot I kicked something, and then with all my strength I ran up the rest of those 278 stairs as swiftly as I could.

Richard, in peaceful contemplation, was enjoying the landscape. We waited in some excitement for the next person to arrive. Of course he might equally as well have gone down, still we waited. After a while, not a very long while, there emerged and together, through the opening, a respectable rotund "père de famille" and a seminarist. They looked innocently at the landscape, and then they disappeared. It was a shivery little incident, and I have never forgotten the touch of that creeping hand upon my leg in the black darkness of the Colonne de Juillet.

The old Bastille once divided aristocrat from plebeian, the faubourg St. Antoine from the place des Vosges. It was built to keep the populace of Paris in subjection. To-day the populace has swept over the Bastille and occupied the quarter of its enemies and pushed them westwards.

As in all big cities the dingy quarters grow apace. They are both sides of the river here, north and south, and as with us they travel westwards. Paris within the fortifications draws now two rather flattened semi-circles on either river bank, the river itself bending at both

ends to meet them. And the whole, because of these bends in the river, drawn on a map is more heart-shaped than circular. And heart-shaped Paris lies across the map with its pointed end westward. The twin hills, north and south the river, are both in the eastern half of the city, and it is because of their slopes that this eastern end is broadened out.

Long ago the Romans settled on the southern hill to dominate the Gaulish village on the island in the river, the *île de la Cité*, and used its slopes for their baths and arena. The baths form part now of the *Musée Cluny*. The scanty remains of the arena can be seen on the eastern slope of *Montparnasse*, away in the *Gobelins* quarter of the town—a few tiers of seats on what was once the bare hill side, with the flat space of the arena at their feet. And all around the houses of the poor.

Not far from the arena in the *rue Monge* stand the church and churchyard of *St. Médard*. The churchyard has been turned now into a playground for the children of the quarter. In the eighteenth century it was one of the most crowded resorts of Paris. For the tomb of the Jansenist deacon, *Abbé Pâris*, who is buried here, suddenly took to working miracles. As Jansenism was not looked on with favour at the court, as it laboured, indeed, under suspicion of heresy in ecclesiastical circles, and as a wonder-working tomb scandalised the philosophers of that Age of Reason, *Louis XV.* was induced at last to forbid all pilgrimages to the tomb. The churchyard was closed. Then to the immortal glory of French wit an unknown epigrammist seized the situation. And next morning all Paris read the notice placarded in the closed and guarded churchyard which began, as all royal proclamations should, “*De par le Roi.*”

“*De par le Roi,
Défense à Dieu
De faire miracle
En ce lieu.*”

And the claims of French royalty as seen from within find themselves hardly overstated.

The Jansenist deacon, less famous in his life than after it, was buried in St. Médard as in the parish church of his quarter: for round the corner from St. Médard, which stands where the rue Monge and the avenue des Gobelins meet is the boulevard de Port Royal, then the centre of Jansenism in Paris. The very building of the Port Royalists with its brown-tiled Mansard roof, its chapel, its quiet old-time garden behind its high walls, is still here. It is now a maternity hospital, but even to-day with something of that grey still quiet of the Jansenists lingering over it. And the history of Port Royal and the strange atmosphere of the *Pensées* of Pascal grew realer when we walked here. At one time we often used to go that way, for the boulevard of Port Royal joins our own boulevard of Montparnasse just where the "Boul' Miche" runs into it. It is a boulevard of hospitals and quiet, and the quaint tiled Mansard roofs of the Port Royal on one side and the dome of the Val de Grâce on the other give it a character and a charm no other of the outer boulevards possess.

And always, too, I felt that this spirit of Port Royal must not be forgotten, must be understood and remembered to understand France. It is the other aspects of the French and of Paris that we think so typical; perhaps they are. They prevailed. Officially they cast out Port Royal, but Port Royal and all it stands for was bred in their bone, it is flesh of their flesh. It still lives and grows among them. It produced the Huguenots, the Jansenists, the modern Protestants. It gave Condé, Henri IV., Pascal, Racine, to France. The spirit of Port Royal is not alien. It stood, it stands still, before me always in the path, saying, "I too am French." So the brown-tiled roofs of the Hospice de la Maternité stood for much in my thoughts.

Just by chance, in geographical irony, the roofs of Port Royal look across the corner of the boulevard on to the roof of the Bal Bullier.

It is perhaps one of the most instructive, it is quite one of the most fascinating, walks in Paris to start here at the Observatoire corner, to go down all the length of the Boul' Miche past the bronze fountain in its green garden (the Bal Bullier on the other side), past all the public buildings, clinics, écoles des mines, musée, the garden of the École de Pharmacie, the gardens of the Luxembourg, the Odéon fountain, the cafés of the Boul' Miche with the Café d'Harcourt and the Lycée facing each other, the Roman baths, the ends of the twisting narrow streets which made the old students' quarter on the slope of the hill by the river (up them if one wills in search of many historical memories), past the fountain where St. Michael stands, his drawn sword in his hand, supported by the figures of Truth, Wisdom, Justice, and Power, in his fight with the Dragon of wrong: then across the bridge of St. Michael on to the island of the city, where the boulevard du Palais continues the Boul' Miche, and the Sainte Chapelle, the Palais de Justice, the site of the early Royal Palace of France on the left, the Prefecture of Police and the Tribunal of Commerce on the right, with a scattering of shops between, occupy all the width of the island; then over one of the oldest bridges in Paris, the Pont au Change, where the money changers and the goldsmiths once congregated each in his open booth (boutique) on the bridge itself, just as the jewellers still do on the Ponte Vecchio in Florence to this day. Here is one of the grandest views of the city, historically if not pictorially. All, almost all, the great monuments of Paris from Notre Dame to the Louvre lie at one's hand, with the Sainte Chapelle just behind and the Place du Châtelet, where once, not long ago, the

great prison stood, in front. Here two prisons looked across the water at one another, for on the island facing the river and now part of the Palais de Justice stands what is left of the Prison of the Conciergerie where Marie Antoinette suffered and, Life's irony again, Robespierre was imprisoned. Then on the right bank up the whole length of the boulevard Sébastopol, made, as its name indicates, in the second half of the last century, to drive a broad way through a mass of small streets all alive with history, which were up to the sixteenth century the centre of Paris, and to join north with south in one line of wide boulevard two and a half miles long, and so give scope to the commerce of the quarter.

The boulevard Sébastopol is filled, and lined, and crammed with shops, shops of all sorts and descriptions, big shops, little shops, shops of well-known traders, and shops for specialists or for the trader himself. The boulevard Sébastopol is, in fact (or was), a sort of short index to the produce of a great city. It was immortalised too (for me anyhow) by Daudet, for M. Chèbe spent long mornings here "gratuitously criticising its construction."

The Sébastopol runs into the line of the Grands Boulevards just between the Porte St. Denis and the Porte St. Martin, the two triumphal arches set up by Louis XIV. to commemorate his own victories, one over the Germans and the other in Holland, with the famous Passage du Rhin so belauded in the literature, sculpture, painting, and prints of the time that one comes across it everywhere even on the saucers, though one hardly ever sees the really romantic episode in that very theatrical campaign, the arrival of the pathetic Louise de la Vallière at the camp.

Louise was the one person, except his mother Anne (and she died when he was still a very young man), who ever really loved the ineffable Louis for himself alone, and she loved him devotedly. Poor limping, beautiful

Louise who loved her Louis when he made royal fun of her limp and her large mouth: adored him still more when her love, her wonderful fair hair, her brown eyes, her perfect complexion, had taken the sultan's fancy. Loved him even when her conscience, aided by the king's fickleness, awoke and her tears seriously annoyed him. He, Louis, could do no wrong, why then should she cry? Loved him when at last, between conscience, his fickleness, and her sorrow, she fled for the third time from the court to the convent, and this time stayed there, praying "for her own sins and the soul of the king."

Louis insisted that his wife, his children, legitimate and illegitimate, his harem, especially its more prominent occupants, should pay her visits of state. And the chroniclers tell how one evening Madame de Montespan, harassed, tracked, at the end of her power, and in deadly fear of exposure, came to the convent parlour and sending one of the nuns to buy her the materials of a marvellous sauce (they cost £2) of which she was very fond, mixed and ate it while she talked to Louise. The sauce and Louise's pitying presence gave her back at last something of her own black daring, and looking round, she, who had wept and sought for shelter, almost a hiding place, asked how Louise could be "at ease" among the hardships of the convent. Louise's worn face lit up. "Je ne suis pas aise," she said, "je suis contente."

But her successor in the post of mistress-in-chief to the "Roi Soleil" was not made of the stuff to understand. Madame de Montespan could never be "contente" where she was not "at ease," so she left the convent. They never met again. And Louise continued to the end of her life to pray "for her own sins and the soul of the king."

Among the tinsel glitter of Louis' "affaires de cœur" the love of poor Louise de la Vallière shows the one real gem.

Beyond the Grands Boulevards, the boulevard de Strasbourg continues the line of the Boul' Miche and the Sébastopol from south to north across the length of Paris, and from the Gare de l'Est where it ends one can look down the whole length of the boulevards to the dome of the Tribunal de Commerce on the City Island.

We did not often go along the Grands Boulevards. Having seen its shops, its fashionable crowds, its "flâneurs," its costumes inside the shops and out, we preferred less mundane joys. But sometimes on fête days when the procession of the Mi-Carême went down the boulevards, or before the Jour de l'An when the pavements were covered with rows of booths selling New Year's gifts, we would go like the rest of the good bourgeoisie of Paris to look, and walk, and see.

We saw strange things sometimes, things which pulled one up with a mental gasp. Things which suddenly made one feel in an utterly strange and incomprehensible land, which made one exclaim bewildered, "How ever *can* they?" And then start wondering and wondering.

One year, I remember, quite a number of the booths were selling little mechanical dolls dressed as boys and girls who when they were wound up entered little "cabinets" and sat down there . . . and finally came out again.

We had stopped at one booth surrounded by a crowd of people to see what the owner was showing, and so inadvertently come in for the whole exhibition, including the illuminating comments of the vendor. The crowd, a very ordinary one, of men, women, and some children, the men perhaps predominating, was evidently amused, with that somewhat furtive sense of fun which accompanies, say, a joke in church.

"C'est drôle," they said and smiled, a little surreptitiously.

Our morbid secrecy about natural functions, unknown in France, is foolish enough, but from an absence of secrecy to such a "*jouet amusant pour tout le monde*," as it was labelled, is a long and to us a staggering step.

The walking sellers of penny toys and other small articles, each with his tray round his neck, who live on our London kerbs are almost unknown in Paris; such regiments of them as used to form up along Ludgate Hill or Newgate Street at Christmas time never happen. Instead the wide boulevards allow what our London streets cannot give room for, rows of fixed booths. The New Year, which is the Christmas of France as far as parties and present giving and card sending is concerned (Christmas day remaining what its name implies, the birthday of Christ, and so purely a religious festival), is the great occasion for such a market and the booths spring up all along the Grands Boulevards from their aristocratic beginning at the Capucines to at least their commercial middle at the Porte St. Denis. They sell toys of all sorts and kinds, walking sticks, penknives, a mild and not very appetising form of gingerbread cake, natively brown or covered sometimes with a white coat (white of egg and sugar) which is still considered, though the custom is dying out in Paris, the right and proper thing to eat at the New Year. The booths remain for round about a week on the boulevards, and the popular, proper thing is to walk along and look at them.

It was just about the New Year too, when the shops as well as the stalls were crowded with presents, that we saw in a jeweller's shop a very, very old thing in the modernest possible embodiment, a charm for airmen. It was labelled "*Médaille protectrice pour aviateurs*" and consisted in a large and really beautiful gold medal on which was a figure of the Virgin in flying drapery with

the clouds beneath her feet, and round the edge the legend:

"Ave Maria, Reine du Ciel, Soutiens-moi."

They looked very expensive and were delicately laid to rest in blue satin cases.

The shop, which was a very fashionable jeweller's and sold every variety of expensive trinket and unnecessary etcetera, had a most delicious sign, "Au Petit Gain." Shops, in swagger quarters too, still run to names, mottoes rather, of this sort, though they are rare and growing rarer. It certainly lends a flavour to the purchase of a hat, say, to buy it at the sign of "The Ladies' Happiness," "Au Bonheur des Dames." Observe the "Dames" though the distinction between "dames" and "femmes" is not quite synonymous with that between women and ladies.

Sometimes on Sundays we went appropriately to church. At least we went to the churches of Paris. Perversely enough it usually wasn't on a Sunday, but on other days. Roman Catholic churches have at least three points of superiority over Protestant ones. They are always open. They are always warmed. And there isn't any entrance gate in the form of a fee to the verger. In consequence they all, like the museums and the Sorbonne, collect the waifs and strays who have no fires, or who find fires expensive.

I once heard this very consequence given as an insuperable objection to the open church by an Anglican clergyman. It struck me as so incongruous as to be quite comic, which I fear hurt his feelings. To him the destitute sinner, or possibly the destitute saint, warming a starved body or resting a tired one in the House of God was an "irreverent use of a sacred edifice." I wonder why it is that the Protestant parson always seems somehow to consider the particular church to

which he is attached his own property, while in Roman Catholic countries the churches remain much more what they were in the Middle Ages, the people's.

This accounts perhaps more than the loss of candles and incense for the frigid chilliness of the English church. Like the parlours of the poor and the drawing-rooms of the middle classes they are sat in only on Sundays and on special occasions (services), and in consequence, like the drawing-rooms and the parlours, are uncomfortable, lifeless, and frequently boring. I have often wondered when the now perennial wail about diminishing church-attendance arises in Church Congresses that it never seems to be remembered that if you practically forbid people to go to a place except when you call them there, it is at least likely they will stay away when you tell them to come. A large step on the way to not going to church at all is surely not to go on six days of the week or for twenty-three hours of the twenty-four. Roman Catholic churches, whatever else they have or have not, have never this forlorn and chilly air of the unused best parlour. Not even those city churches whose parishioners have gradually ebbed away from them as those of St. Séverin.

St. Séverin is almost the oldest church in Paris. You get to it by turning off the Boul' Miche opposite Place St. Michel. It dates, like Chartres Cathedral, mainly from the thirteenth century. And although the whole west front does not really belong to it, having been brought bodily from another Paris church pulled down in the eighteen thirties, that too was of the same century. St. Séverin has a fifteenth-century tower, fifteenth-century stained-glass windows (besides modern ones), eighteenth-century frescoes by Flandrin and others. And it has with it all an air of old age and desolation. In its dim aisles gather a few poor souls who come because they have always come, or come perhaps because it is near, and they have nowhere else to sit and nod in quiet. St.

Séverin is little used and almost forgotten, but something of that faith of the thirteenth century which made the great cathedrals, and France's king a saint, still dwells here. Under the groined vaulting of the double ambulatory, and in the quiet of the almost deserted church, there seems to linger to the sensitive something of that intimate, familiar faith which because it believed is to this century "irreverent."

St. Séverin is one of the most forgotten churches in Paris, but the mere ebb of inhabitants here does not make a church a desert as in London, because the church, open all day long and standing where the citizens most do congregate in the market, or near the Exchange, or in a busy street, can be filled with those who come to work in its parish, though very few may sleep there.

This is true of Notre Dame des Victoires, which stands between the Paris Stock Exchange and the Bank of France. It was originally built to celebrate the Fall of Heresy and of La Rochelle. And its Virgin's altar is rich and much besought. The chapel where it stands to the right of the choir is hung round with votive offerings, gilt and silver hearts, and its walls are covered with square slabs of white marble with gold inscriptions: "A Notre Dame des Victoires, Cœur reconnaissant"; "A Marie Reine du Ciel, Vœu exaucé," and the date; "A Notre Dame des Victoires, Prière entendue," and the date. They cover the walls, these little squares of white marble with their gold inscriptions, each showing that somebody has prayed, bargained with heaven for his heart's desire, and got it.

The shine of innumerable candles is before the altar, each lit in hope or gratitude by Our Lady's suppliants, Our Lady of the Victories who triumphed over heresy and the Huguenots. And she stands, Our Lady, between the Stock Exchange and the Bank. And some of the gilt and silver hearts have been hung up by the stockbrokers,

and theirs are among the "Cœurs reconnaissants" whose prayers have been heard.

One can see them, if one watches, among the group of devotees who always gather round every celebrated shrine, and they give its distinctive character to this one. Between two deals they come to light a candle and to pray. To what sordid supplications Our Lady of the Victories must be asked sometimes to give an ear! And the white "ex votos" on the chapel wall, the "vœux exaucés," what bargains driven with Heaven and obtained on earth do they represent?

Daudet, in *Les Rois en Exil*, has a wonderful little sketch of a dealer in faked antiquities, who between selling and making frauds would drop in to the nearest church to "prendre un petit bout de messe" without neglecting his business. So Notre Dame des Victoires is conveniently situated. And she has grown very rich. Her altar blazes. Is it better or worse I wonder that in the Protestant world the business man does not drive bargains with heaven? . . . instead, when he wins, he sends cheques to the hospitals.

Notre Dame des Victoires was built in the worst style of a bad period. It is heavily and hideously ornate and entirely insincere, but Time and the irony of the *Zeitgeist* have brought it into a strange kind of harmony with its present surroundings. As the embodied idea of a church for stockbrokers and company promoters it has points; it even seems to succeed in expressing them.

Not very far away from Our Victorious Lady, right in the midst of the commercial quarter of Paris, is another church which is also used mostly by those whose work lies near it, and that is St. Eustache. St. Eustache stands on the edge of the Halles Centrales, much as the Opera House stands in Covent Garden. It is only divided from the open zinc-roofed, iron-columned spaces of the

market with its twelve pavilions and covered streets by a breadth of cobble-stoned road. It is next door to the Bourse de Commerce and beyond it, eastward, stretches the mass of commercial un-Haussmanised Paris: the Paris of tall shops and narrow streets, the maze of old Paris as it grew through the centuries, from the crusading days of Philippe Auguste to those of Napoleon III. And just as Notre Dame des Victoires gets its distinctive character from those employed in its immediate neighbourhood, so St. Eustache is used by the "Dames des Halles," that race apart of market women, fat, thrifty, commercial, expansive, with a hard eye to a bargain and a fast running tongue to get it. A strong full-blooded race with always, even on top of the most mountainous body, a perfectly coiffured head.

St. Eustache is full of these. Between two deals they too come to pray. But the atmosphere is different. No one rich wonder-working altar with silver-gilt hearts, the shine of candles, and the marble acknowledgments of favours received. St. Eustache is large and shadowy, so large its modern tawdry embellishments go unremarked, or at least are not too obtrusive in the Gothic spaces of its aisles and ambulatory. And if its worshippers drive bargains they are bargains in real things not in paper substitutes.

St. Eustache is patched with Renaissance work, good and bad, but in its plan, its atmosphere, still keeps its own late Gothic character. And that is a character of a real though of an attenuated religious sincerity.

That curious endeavour of the Revolutionists to create not only a new earth but a fresh heaven, and to set up Reason on the throne of authority, one of the most interesting outbursts of religious feeling ever recorded (though like all unsuccessful attempts called irreligious), saw part of its great festival within the walls of St. Eustache. Its chief ceremony held in Notre Dame with

the curious details of its performance, its very palpable goddess Reason in the form of a stage deity from the lower theatrical boards, its mechanical devices, its garlanded chorus bearing torches, its stage effects, the borrowed pagan setting of its ceremony yet held in a Christian church, and the very real feeling of those who conceived and organised it, make it with the great *Fête de l'Etre Suprême* "one of the most remarkable spiritual outbursts of that extraordinary time.

The Revolution, born in blood and misery, had yet fast hold of one of the great twin truths of Eternity, the oneness of mankind, and aristocrats were slain because they would not own it. Almost all the great movements which have swept over the earth seem to have arisen from out the great love of man for his fellows, and many have failed in bloodshed and disorder because the other man must be forced to love back. The French Revolutionists made the same mistake. They used force, on the aristocrat within and the nations without the frontier, and so ended in the Terror and the *Grande Armée*.

In England we are inclined to symbolise the Revolution by the Guillotine, and we mostly ignore or forget the meaning and the feeling of the "*Fête de la Fédération*," where aristocrat and market woman worked side by side trundling barrows in the *Champs de Mars*; we forget the religious emotion of the "*Fête de l'Etre Suprême*," and the fresh Heaven which the Terrorists themselves sought to create when they enthroned Reason on high as the supreme Authority for man: acknowledging as Robespierre did that religion was the foundation of society, and to make a new earth needed a fresh heaven.

Yet to deify reason was characteristically French; almost as it were the outward expression of the innate feeling of all French thought. For French thought makes one right when one "has reason," "on a raison," and identifies wisdom with goodness. "*Sois sage*," "*Be*

good;”—the very language showing that to the French reason is rightness. So to deify Reason was only after all to call God by another, and in this case His more native, name; always to the established church a shocking and blasphemous business.

The Terrorist failed. He put Reason in heaven, but the guillotine on the place de la Concorde, for his fellow-man must be made to see right and to love mankind; and the deep religious idealism of his endeavour is often lost sight of in some of the means, taught him by both Church and State, which he took to reach it.

After the symbolic installation of Reason in high heaven for which St. Eustache was one of the earthly vehicles, the church was turned into a Temple of Agriculture. But the myth-making powers of the people were not equal to the creating of this new Heaven, any more than their political powers were able to establish entirely the new earth of which they dreamed, and with the end of the Revolution St. Eustache came back to his own again, and the women of the market place to his church.

They come to it now on week days, and give it its distinctive character, so different from that of Our Lady of the Victories. On Sundays and the Feast of St. Cecilia its congregation is different, for St. Eustache is the musical church of Paris, and Paris knows it.

St. Eustache is memorable to me for a different reason. I was once sitting there alone, watching the market women at their prayers, when there came up to me a round, delightful little man in a cassock.

He begged pardon, but could he help me, as I was, he saw, a stranger.

I thought at first he was some sort of superior verger, anxious perhaps for centimes to show me treasures. As I hadn't any centimes to spare I explained I had just come to see the church and liked to stay and look at things.

He smiled up at me, for he wasn't by nearly a head as tall as I was, and said he "quite understood that, so did he."

And there was such a frank, friendly look in his very bright eyes that I went on talking. He listened, and yet he did not listen. All the time his eyes were on me intently, looking through me, looking up and down, friendly, considering, but obviously through it all he was following his own thought. At last it came, with a note of surprised sadness.

"Vous êtes contente ici, and yet you are not Catholic?"

I said "No." I certainly wasn't Catholic in his sense. In fact I had even been baptised a Protestant of the Church of England. I left my religious history there.

"Yet you come here," he said, "and not just 'en touriste,' as most strangers. I have watched." Then a radiant smile came over his face. "Is it the Truth which speaks to you?"

"I hope so," I answered soberly. He was so sincere, and so transparently simple, it seemed cruel to damp his hopes.

"Listen, mon enfant," and he laid a hand on my arm. "There have been converts. I have known them, two English ladies, cousins to milor Mayor." (It was delicious, his pride in their aristocratic birth, a delusion he shared with most foreigners who rank milor Mayor with the peerage.) "They came to the Faith, why not you?"

I said I did not know why, but probably it was a wrong mind or maybe a bad heart. He shook his head.

"I have watched," he said. "A priest reads souls as he reads his bréviaire." (The dear little man hadn't a trace of vanity, he had simply accepted psychological omniscience as part of his clerical outfit.) "And I read yours. C'est un bon cœur, mon enfant, un bien bon cœur."

I felt my eyes dropping before his in a shamed kind of desperation.

"Un bien bon cœur. . . . And the good God keeps you in His hand. I who have served Him for forty years can see it. Yet you are not Catholic?"

This time I did not smile at the surprised pain of his voice. I said as gently as I could I was not Catholic, nor I thought ever would be.

For a moment he stood puzzled as it were, saddened perhaps by this perversity, then the round, delightful face got back its bright serenity.

"I shall hope," he said. "I shall wait. At any hour I am here or at the presbytère. Ask for Monsieur le curé." And quite simply he raised his hand, touching me on the forehead, the breast, and on each shoulder.

There was dignity in his gesture. Then his hand lingered.

"I have blessed you, my child, and signed you with the holy sign. There are those of the fold who know it not. And you whom the Good God keeps within his hand. . . . Ah, le cœur est bon, mon enfant, bien bon. I shall pray."

I never went to St. Eustache again. I could not hurt his heart, which was indeed good, nor his faith, which was so complete and childlike. But the bright eyes in the round delightful face, the surprised pain of his voice, the priestly dignity of the gestures dwell with me yet. I am glad he prays. The fold is larger than he dreams. Please God we stand within it, he and I . . . and the Buddhist priest who also blessed me at his altar shrine.

But one phrase stays haunting me. It comes still in the silences, sad, reproaching.

"One whom the Good God keeps within his hand." If that were true, my sin is great.

St. Eustache stands on the edge of the market, "Les Grandes Halles," which is Covent Garden, Smithfield,

Billingsgate, fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, butter, cheese, all rolled into one. Its size is enormous. It stands on 22 acres. It has twelve pavilions divided by covered streets 48 ft. wide, and a boulevard 105 ft. There are 250 stalls to each pavilion. They are 40 ft. square and their rent is 2*d.* a day. Underneath the ground are cellars of the same size and each 12 ft. high. In the Halles of Paris from dawn till 8.0 the market is wholesale and by auction. After 8.0 the thousands of stalls each tended by their fat, thrifty, elegantly coiffured market-ladies are open for retail trade. In the wholesale market alone, trade to the amount of £25,000 is done daily. And yet the Halles are only "Les Grandes Halles," or "Les Halles Centrales," they are not by a long way the only markets in Paris.

It has been reckoned that every day Paris spends in meat, wine, and bread alone 3,000,000 of francs; that in one year its 2,750,000 of people consume 797,000,000 lb. of bread, 456,000,000 quarts of wine, 457,600,000 lb. of meat, and 56,500,000 lb. of fish. "Le Ventre de Paris," as Zola called the market, has need to work hard.

There was something about it, about its efficient management, its grand lines, its capacity for enhancing its business talents by its artistic gifts, that fascinated me. I longed to see it at work in its great hours from dawn to 8.0. But to get up at dawn, to go half across Paris before, say, 5.0 in the morning, did not appeal to Richard at all. We turned it over in our minds for a long while. One day, one night rather, in early spring the problem solved itself. We did not get up, we stayed awake instead. We spent a wonderful night out in Paris.

It happened like this. Easter brought some people we knew to Paris. We helped them to see the sights, and they invited us one evening to the Opera. Seats away up among the gods where evening dress was not, but you went there up the Grand Escalier with its marble

steps, and rosso antico balustrade, its Algerian onyx handrail, its gilding, and its chandeliers. There is nothing classical here. The whole interior is like an ill digested scheme of an Arabian Nights' palace, the dream of flunkeys and the Third Empire. Sumptuousness everywhere, and yet, triumph of French art, it is somehow neither vulgar nor yet ugly.

It is impossible, generally, to see the foyer for the crowd, but stalls and gallery do meet here, and beneath its balconies lies Paris "en grande toilette." The jewels with which she nightly decks herself gathered here and there in shining clusters or hanging in long continuous lines, deep gold or shimmering white against the dark blue of her summer's evening robe. Paris, the "gai Paris" of the week-end foreigner. It was here. But beneath its gayness, as I looked I seemed to feel the pulse of courage and of kindness which keeps its life so gay and light of heart.

It was in the foyer of the Opera that I saw the first living specimens of the "mondaine" heroines of the traditional French novel, or at least they alone of all the thousands of Frenchwomen I have met or seen looked possible in the part. There were two of them with attendant cavaliers. They came from a box on the grand tier. They had very little on above the waist, but a great deal of make up. To find anything real at all would have needed excavation. So much art, so little sense, no honour, heart, or health—and yet charm. Against all my creed I had to own it. Nothing real or lifegiving, and yet charm. Or was it the evil in me which saw the charm?

As we stood crammed into a corner of the foyer, there came from a box an English peeress, a tiara in her hair. She was dark, she was beautiful, she was real. She passed quite close to the two mondaines. She had dignity, and gentleness, and grace, they had not even

surface prettiness, and yet victoriously in the face of her as she passed, fictive as it was, charm. It left me puzzled, annoyed, and very sore. The contrast was so great, the fact so palpable, and it "didn't ought" to have been.

The thing which I recollect best about the Opera itself was the luxuriance and the total inappropriateness of the ballet which diversified the preparations for the marriage of Juliet with the County. The stalls filled full up for this and hundreds of glasses were levelled at the legs upon the stage. It had been difficult all along to preserve the least illusion (as it always is in opera), or even to believe the actors real. The house is so immense, they look so dwarfed upon the stage, but the ballet was the crowning touch of incongruity. It was not beautiful in line or posture, and the silk tights and the tulle skirts made the far-away figures standing in rows upon the points of their toes more like marionettes than ever. I always think opera should be given behind gauze veils, like tableaux vivants, only thicker, so that what one sees is but suggestion, colour, and dim line and what one hears is real. Then the senses could concentrate on the sound, and not get irrelevantly distracted by the size and weight of the prima donna, or the utterly unsuitable personality of the hero, and all the other incongruities.

It was late when we passed down the Grand Stairway once more, but warm as the mildest summer evening as we stood on the steps of the Opera House, talking. Late as it was the place de l'Opéra was crowded, and down the dark stretch of the avenue the great white globes of dazzling light catching the leaves of the acacia trees turned each into a liquid emerald point against the darkness of the unlit foliage. It was very beautiful. Beneath me the two mondaines, the bareness of their bodies hardly covered by the elaborateness of their

evening cloaks, got into carriages and were driven away. They too were part of the city and its charm.

We took our friends along the Grands Boulevards on the way to their hotel, and the spirit of Paris entering into them, they suggested drinks at a café. So we sat down at little marble-topped tables on the boulevard, and drank coffee and hot chocolate. It was half-past twelve, the place was full, crammed with every sort and kind of people sitting sipping drinks from white cups or little glasses, with the strange cloudy green of absinthe in its long glass standing out conspicuously. Every sort of street seller was still upon the boulevard, from matches to "articles de Paris." The raucous cry, long-drawn out, of "La Pres . . . ssse" still came down the street. Quite the best title for an effective outdoor cry I have ever heard. It carries farthest and sounds clearest. You can always hear its syllables die away however badly shouted, and it is not unpleasant. On the boulevards in the evening it is the cry above all others that one hears. On the other side it is more frequently "L'Eclair."

In the corner of the café sat one of those street artists one finds upon the Grands Boulevards. Young, or more often older, art students fallen on evil times, the failures and the "ratés," but mostly the failures, who will draw you charcoal portraits for the price of two francs each. They come to the cafés to find clients and purchasers and sit at your table and draw you while you drink. Our English friends were much interested in the idea, and late as it was one of them insisted on having his portrait done then and there.

The artist came to our table. He was a little man with a short black beard and a soft voice. As our friends' French was not strong the conversation fell mostly to us, and I got a glimpse into a strange life passed almost exclusively in the cafés of the boulevards, and that at

night, picking up casual clients at two francs a picture. If there were three in a day the artist thought himself lucky. There were seasons, he said, which were bad, and again others, as now, when Paris was full of strangers, which were "not so bad."

"Mais c'est comme ça la vie, que voulez-vous?" he said.

I asked him if he didn't paint pictures of his own. And then as the words left my lips I was sorry I had said it. Something stirred beneath his kindly carelessness.

"Je l'ai voulu une fois," he answered. "But I came to the cafés to get a living." He looked all round, at the lights inside and out, at the gilding, the marble-topped tables, the sprinkle of sawdust on the floor, the men and women talking, drinking, the white cups and the little glasses, the cloudy green of the absinthe.

"C'est comme la tombe, on n'y sort plus." And he drew steadily for two minutes. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"O la, la," he said, in that most French of exclamations, and he smiled deprecatingly. "My clients have sometimes the custom of drinking with me. Mille remerciements, monsieur. I will take an absinthe if you please."

And he took one. As he poured the water into the clear green liquid at the bottom of the tall glass, and watched it rising cloud-like in puffs of white smoke within his glass to colour a pale arsenic green as the water and absinthé mixed, I too watched a something like a little cloud that rose within him and spread till he and it were one.

He finished the portrait in silence. It was passable, with here and there a clever touch which seemed to stand out as distinctly as though put in by some one else. Our friend was quite pleased, however. "You couldn't expect Sargent for two francs," as he said afterwards.

The person who was not pleased was the artist himself. He stood by the side of the marble-topped table looking down on his work. Then he pointed to the two or three touches which had seemed to me so clever.

"Voilà l'artiste que j'étais," he said. "Mais," with an encircling gesture, "le tombeau l'enferme."

He drank the last of his absinthe quickly.

"Bon soir, mesdames, messieurs. Morituri tesalutant."

He swept off his hat in a low bow and went quickly down the boulevard.

The Latin tag with its French sound values was lost on our friends. It was so totally unexpected I had almost missed it myself. The element of theatrical effect too was disconcerting to the Anglo-Saxon mind. But although they had missed his Latin and stumbled at his French, the sound of his voice had been sufficient to make our friends half understand. We all sat still looking down the boulevard in some consternation. Then the owner of the portrait shook his head.

"Too much absinthe," he said. "Beastly stuff, I wonder how they can drink it. Well, it's time we were getting back."

The cafés were still lit. There were still people drinking at the little marble-topped tables. Still passers-by along the boulevard, but the street sellers had gone. The shout of "La Presse" no longer came above the noises of the traffic. There were fewer cabs and carriages. The last omnibuses had passed. One saw the vista of the streets unhidden.

We took our friends back, and started to walk across Paris to our quarter. Away from the boulevards the streets were almost empty. The lamps stretched in long straight lines of yellow light high above the roadway. Their reflections lay in ever darkening patches on the pavements. A cab perhaps passed swiftly, its horse's hoofs making a clatter marked off in three distinct

zones of sound, the coming, the passing, and the going, each with its echo in the emptiness. The shops and offices and houses were all dark. The theatres and restaurants shut. Here Paris slept, had been sleeping, would still sleep. It was two o'clock. No stir in the streets. A city silent.

We crossed the rue de Rivoli and came out on the quays, and the night, the infinite warm darkness of a summer's night, enfolded us. It lay between us and the houses, dividing the city as the river beneath. It was velvety and soft and the lines of houses held it, as the quays the stream. It had the qualities of a living being asleep. And across and across it along the white thread of the bridges, mysteriously in mid-air swung rows of red and yellow lights. For Paris lights its bridges with alternate red and yellow lamps, that add a something to its beauty no other city has. They shone now, undisturbed by passer-by or traffic, still, in the still night, one behind the other as bridge succeeded bridge.

It was the very first time I had seen Paris, had stood on a Paris bridge at two o'clock in the summer of an April night. I held Richard's arm tightly. It was too beautiful to speak. And there was a magic in it one feared to break; that strange quality of dream-like unreality which real things at times possess. It was as if in coming to the bridge we had walked into some one else's dream, some one whom our least movement might awake.

Beneath us the dark river ran silent, as at the bottom of a pit, and the lines of red and yellow lights were doubled, reality and reflection, as bridge succeeded bridge. . . .

It was not we who broke the dream, but the deafening clatter of a covered cart as it drove on to the bridge. We watched it coming, the piled baskets gleaming as the lamp-light caught their edges. At first just angry at the noise and the lost magic of the night. Then as it

passed a thought seized me. Those were market baskets. The cart was going to the Halles.

"Let's go too," I said.

"Where?" asked Richard a little blankly.

"To the Halles, of course. It's going there. It? Why the cart. Oh, do let's. You know we shall never get up in time."

Richard is not loth to stay out of bed, he only objects to getting out. Now though he doubted whether it was good for me he was prepared to admit it "wouldn't make much difference if we just went to see anyhow." So we turned back off the bridge and followed the cart which was really and truly going to the Halles.

It drew up, indeed, in the open space around the church of St. Eustache where multitudes of other carts stood silent in the night, horse and driver gone. The high-swung electric lights, great globes of white fire, shone on their tarpaulin covers till they glistened like black ice. Not a sound here, not a movement. Our cart, the one we had followed, disappeared into the midst of the waiting lines of horseless, driverless carts and was swallowed up. We turned down the broad covered central street of the building, piles of baskets lay everywhere along the pathway, but not a person or a sound, only alternate patches of black shadow and bright light from the swinging globes under the glass roof overhead. And the building loomed round us immense. We tried the transverse smaller streets to find them piled too with baskets, full too of black shadows and bright light from the swinging globes of electricity overhead. But not a person or a sound.

"It must begin soon," I said. "We'll ask the gendarme."

That personage stood hidden in his hooded cloak, the pointed cowl drawn over head and képi, at the corner of the street. We almost tumbled over him as we turned,

he stood so still. The waxed ends of his irreproachable moustache quivered a little as we stood in the circle of the electric light before him, but he retained an air of imperturbable politeness.

The market would begin "dans un petit quart d'heure" (a little quarter of an hour).

"Of course we had to wait that, hadn't we?" Richard agreed.

There was a curious charm in walking down these deserted covered streets, patched with such brilliant light and such dark shadow, and lined with piles and piles of market baskets, and ours the only feet to wake the echoes that went ringing down before us. One had the sensation of busy life in its activity arrested by a touch and left still.

We had gone down nearly all the covered streets of the vast building and turned a sudden corner and there in the angle of the two pathways stood a lighted wooden bureau. Its two glass windows were shut, but behind them, and full in the light which hung above his head, an old man slept. His two arms rested on the top of an open drawer in front of him, his head was on his arms, and all the little silver rings of hair which curled themselves over the dark blue cloth of his regulation cap shone in the bright light. His face, except the wrinkled forehead and the crow's feet round the tired eyes, was hidden. He slept, gently, softly as a child, alone in the empty silence of that building.

And the poetry of age, of the sleeptime of life, the pathos of that unprotected helplessness, the drawing wonder of that withdrawal of the spirit we call sleep, all came upon me as I looked. I had thought of age before as a "decline," not as an attainment; as of something "past its prime," not as something growing into beauty. I had thought of sleep as a sort of bodily meal, something one took to go on again, not as a

mysterious stilling of the springs of consciousness, a daily passing of the mind's self, a starting on that journey from which we all return, knowing nothing of the way. For the first time as it were I saw sleep from the outside, and its mystery drew and puzzled me. Its quality of defenceless purity struck on me. It seemed something other and something more than mere mental forgetfulness. And that old man asleep in the bureau of the Halles, neither specially beautiful nor specially distinguished, that ordinary old man in his official uniform opened paths of new beauty and of strange thought down which I wander yet.

We turned away at last, afraid our mere presence might disturb his peace, and went on down the silent street. The open space of the irregular square lay at the end of the pathway. As we went towards it a faint murmur of sound came out to meet us.

"The market," I cried. "It must be. Do come on."

The open square was fuller of carts than ever. They still stood motionless, horses and drivers gone, the shine of the electric light slipping down their tarpaulin sides and turning their covers to sheets of black ice. The stir did not come from here, but the murmur of sound was real, round the next corner we met it.

A group of men, not a very large group, mostly with the blue blouses of peasants, with immense white felt hats upon their heads, huge circles of hats that turned slightly upwards at the far brim's edge. They all carried sticks in their hands. On the edge of the crowd, and sprinkled here and there among the white felt hats, were a few women in black with black shawls over their heads. Standing in the midst on an upturned basket a tall thin man who talked rapidly. The crowd was silent, occasionally a woman standing on tiptoe, as though to see something invisible to us, would cry, "M'sieur." The men made no sound. And the thin man's speech was

nothing but strings and strings of figures called out with incredible rapidity. He would point to the invisible something at his feet, call through long series of figures, tick something in his note book, motion to an old man in a rusty coat to pull the something away, and begin again. Save for the occasional "M'sieur" of a woman no one spoke.

"How does he do it?" I asked. But Richard was blank. And while we were still wondering the thin man got down from his improvised platform and disappeared, the crowd broke up. Odd men and women pulled away baskets that lay on the ground and the rest drifted off.

"It's over. Oh, this can't be all," I said in quite tragic tones of disappointment.

"There's the gendarme," said Richard.

And there in effect he was at the corner just behind us.

"Assurément non," he said. "Not at all. This had been nothing but the mushroom market. If one wished really to see something one must wait for the flower market. And a flower market this morning of especial beauty," he added, "being Easter. It would begin at five."

"Five! But that was surely a long way away, right away in to-morrow morning early."

The gendarme smiled.

"Au contraire aujourd'hui," he said, "en trois quarts d'heure."

He exaggerated as he had done before, it was not yet four, but we believed him.

"In the meantime," he added, "a seat upon those baskets in the far corner over there would relieve madame of much fatigue."

Madame was extremely grateful for permission to sit on an upturned basket. Indeed, sitting on some with one as a footstool and against a pile of others was very

comfortable, upturned market baskets having a give as of spring beds.

The immense building sank into silence again. Patches of dark shadow and bright light chequered all the pathway as far as one could see. The stir of the mushroom market had completely died away. Only the ring of the gendarme's feet as he paced the asphalted roadway made any sound within the silence, and soon that too was gone. The gendarme went back to his corner and his immobility. . . .

We watched a poor old woman, a mere huddle of rags, shuffle from light to light furtively along the covered street, until within the darkness of a patch of shadow she sank against some baskets and was still. . . .

Then for a space there was no sound at all. . . .

At last a striking clock and a sense of chill and stiffness brought me to my feet.

"Let's walk awhile," I said, and we started down the lamplit pathway towards the open outside world.

And there was day. A grey, twilight day, born without struggle or pain, or any flush of coloured dawn, a quiet creeping day that was now just lifting darkness off the roofs of the tall houses, higher and higher into the cold fresh sky. Away in the east behind the white spire of a church the unseen sun had touched the sky to palest blue. The lamps were out. The night was done.

Up from the square and out of the houses came the living stir of men and women. Long lines of carts were moving slowly into the market. On the sawdust-sprinkled floor of the "brasseries" groups of blue-bloused peasants in their huge felt hats were standing. The Restaurant aux Escargots (of the Snails) at the corner was full of early workmen drinking for the most part coffee, hot bouillon, or plain milk. The square was busy with moving figures unloading baskets everywhere. Only the streets were empty as though daylight had come quickly

in the middle of the night. It was cold, that pointed, chilly freshness which comes with every dawn, colder always than the night itself.

I shivered, the shiver one gives when one gets unexpectedly into cold water. But Richard's head had disappeared inside his coat collar, only the ends of his moustache came over it on each side. Alas! the aristocratic nose was undoubtedly tinged with blue.

"Ugh," he said, but eloquently. And he surveyed the moving figures in the square, the workmen in the open "brasseries," the growing brightness of the day, with undisguised amazement and displeasure.

"Getting up at this time in the morning," he said in the tone of voice of, "They ought to know better."

"And doing it every day too," I put in.

"Absurdly over-rated virtue, early rising," said Richard severely. "Getting up before even the day is ready for you. It's . . . it's . . ."

"Like being too early at a dinner party," I suggested. "The hostess isn't dressed and the drawing-room isn't warm."

"Ugh," said Richard again.

But I stopped him. There on the opposite pavement stood a glowing brazier, fixed on to it a large and shining coffee urn. A neat old woman sat on one side of it. Before her, temptingly, stood white cups on an improvised table. A fragrance of hot coffee came out of the copper urn and floated over the roadway. I snuffed it hungrily.

"Hot coffee," I said. "Quite hot and, yes, and pretty good."

"A fire," said Richard, "I could warm myself."

So we crossed the road and Richard got as near the brazier as he dared while the little old woman, who was wonderfully neat, and only wore a crossed black knitted shawl to keep out the cold, took cups from a basket, washed them carefully in a pail of water under the table,

and dried them on a red checked cloth before she filled them with hot coffee. And each customer's cup was washed and dried and polished in the same way in front of him. The cups set ready on the table were merely advertisement. I wondered very much why. And as the old woman seemed friendly though uncommunicative, and Richard was hugging the brazier with obvious satisfaction just as close as he dared, I asked her.

She replied in two proverbs: "Honest deeds like the light" and "Seeing is believing."

When at last we went back across the square to the market again the day had fully come. That little patch of pale blue sky behind the white church spire had spread over the whole city. There was now a glint of gold in the daylight as it lay upon the roofs and houses, and the shadows in the streets were long. The pointed chill of dawn had passed. Instead the freshness of an early summer's morn was come. The world seemed new washed, alive and full of beauty. There was the stir of first beginning in the sky and streets, that half-shy, half-sudden energy which dawning strength puts to an untried task.

The whole square now was one jostle of figures and market baskets. Piles of these moved over the roadway and down the covered streets, others stationary in rows lined all the kerbstones. I gave a cry of wonder as I came near them, for there on the kerbway were tall hampers, oval in shape and made of fine white wicker, and all inside they were lined with bunches of watercress, tied securely to the sides, and still holding drops of water on their dark green leaves. To look down them was like looking down a moss-covered well.

"Isn't that fascinating!" I said, and stood still looking. "It's exactly like a green well."

"I should prefer," returned Richard judiciously, "not to be reminded of cold water till a warmer hour."

"Stup," I said, and shook his arm. "We are going to walk down here with green wells on each side of us." And we did.

"Now I know one reason why French watercress tastes so good, it doesn't get mangled."

"That must be truth," said Richard. "You found it in the right place."

"Young man," I answered severely, as severely as I could, for my soul was dancing within me, "it's I who do the teasing in this ménage, what do you mean?"

"I couldn't say. I am not responsible for anything at this hour of the day when I'm never existing. You can't expect me to know what I mean before I'm here."

"Oh!" I cried, and stood stock still.

We had turned the corner of the covered street and come into the main thoroughfare of the Halles, and here from end to end was the flower market. Two tall hedge-rows of flowers had sprung like magic from the street we had left strewn only with empty baskets. From the little pathway left between them they grew so tall they shut out the world and lined a narrow way that stretched right up to the big red sun itself.

Purple pansies sprang from the very asphalt of the pavement, stiff rows of white hyacinths stood up behind, while the slender-stemmed daffodils lifted their yellow heads above, and the pale white petals of the anemones hung droopingly together as though afraid. The rich red-browns of the wallflowers stood up straight on their sturdy stalks, brushing unconcernedly against the trailing rosebuds whose pink leaves curled so contentedly together. Blue masses of forget-me-nots like fallen patches of the sky above lay here and there, pools of pure colour on the pavement. While over all great branches of blossoming lilac swayed heavily to and fro. Two tall hedgerows of flowers stretching away to the morning sun.

Like real hedgerows too, they glittered with drops of dew, and the sun as he got up quickly and sent his long straight beams right down the pathway touched each in turn with a gleam of fire. Trembling the dewdrops hung a sparkle of light on the edge of a petal making ready to fall.

Within his arm I slipped my hand into Richard's, for the fill of joy and beauty was here. Slowly we went on down the long pathway, between the tall hedgerows, sweet scented, jewel hung, on towards the morning sky and the young, strong sun.

And the fat and thrifty market women, elegantly coiffured, business-souled, must have spied us as we passed, for there ran a murmur down the pathway, a stir of turning heads, and a big good-natured voice sang out—

“Ho, hé, les deux amoureux. Les deux amoureux, ho, hé.”

The patron saint of Paris is a shepherdess, a young girl who kept her flocks in nebulous historic times, and like her greater and more authentic descendant Joan of Arc saved her country from the besieging enemy.

The legend says when Attila besieged Paris Geneviève saved it from destruction, and when the Devil would have claimed his own there, Geneviève saved their souls for heaven. So the Parisians took her for their patron saint, and yet to-day there is no church which is hers alone. Her church, built where her bones were laid on the top of the Muses' Hill, that both heights of Paris might have their saints, was pulled down in the eighteenth century and rebuilt like a pagan temple under a dome which imitated St. Peter's. It was hardly finished before at the Revolution it was secularised. The body of the shepherdess taken from her temporary resting place in St. Etienne-du-Mont hard by was publicly burnt on

the Place de Grève (Hôtel de Ville). But the Faithful, so it is said, preserved a piece of the true bone and a lock of the real hair to be replaced afterwards, and still to-day to be worshipped, in its reliquary at St. Etienne's.

St. Geneviève's church was turned, appropriately enough, into the last resting place of the Great Ones of a Grateful Country, "*Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie Reconnaissante.*" *Aux Grands Hommes* . . . yet twice France was saved by a woman when the "*grands hommes*" could not. And of the four stories told in frescoes on the walls two are those of women. Twice did a daughter of France save, through Faith, her country from destruction. And the story of Geneviève which is accepted largely as legend is not so strange nor so marvellous as that of the Maid which we know to be truth.

On the walls of the Panthéon on either side they keep their sheep, the enigmatical "*jeune fille*" of France, so apparently null, so potentially effective. And only St. Louis and St. Denis have place besides them.

St. Geneviève was not the saint of kings but of the people. The golden reliquary in her destroyed church was besought by thousands of pilgrims and is not forgotten even to-day. Hard by at St. Etienne's, still in a golden reliquary (a new one), what was saved of her body still lies, and all day and every day candles burn in the chapel before her shrine, and the faithful come to pray while the candle burns, or more often now, because the candle's meaning as a time measurer has been largely lost while the cost of it remains, to give the candle to its guttering end, but to cut short the measure of the prayer.

Except for the shrine of St. Geneviève, St. Etienne's is a desolate church, beautiful but desolate. Its life is centred in its one chapel. The more enterprising tourists come to peep at its pierced rood loft, a miracle of

delicacy and art, and the only one left in all the churches of Paris. But in its Gothic body, adorned with renaissance finery, there is stillness and a lingering cloistral calm.

All round St. Etienne's stood the colleges of the old University. Some, turned to other purposes, still stand. All the streets here are filled with the grey stone, quiet buildings whose names recall the past: the "collège des Ecossais," the "collège de Clermont," of the Jesuits, now le Lycée Louis le Grand, the old Tower of the Abbey of St. Geneviève in the grounds of the Lycée Henri IV., the "collège de Montaigu," now the Bibliothèque St. Geneviève, the "collège Ste. Barbe," almost lost in the buildings of the Ecole Polytechnique. And even the street names make history here as one walks. Rue Clovis which separates the resting place of St. Geneviève from the ruins of her lost abbey; King Clovis at whose court she lived, whose kingdom she saved, whose queen Clothaire she strengthened and kept in Christian ways until the king himself turned Christian; the rue des Ursulines, the rue de la Montagne, the rue Cardinal Lemoine, the only relic of the College of the Cardinal that is left.

Balzac said that these streets were more provincial than the provinces themselves and far stranger to the Parisian. They have indeed the subdued, silent air of a cathedral town, and a passer-by is a rarity. In the busiest of them, the old Roman rue St. Jacques, a street of booksellers, stands the magnificent elm tree planted by Henri IV. and supposed to be the oldest in Paris, as it is certainly the grandest. It gives to this, the busiest street of a silent quarter, an illusion of remoteness, of the last street in a country town which all the neighbouring thoroughfares do but enforce.

It was St. Stephen of the Mountain who received the homeless relics of the great St. Geneviève, for he him-

self had once been homeless, turned out of his church on the Ile de la Cité to make way for the Cathedral of Our Lady.

Our Lady of Paris, Notre Dame de Paris, in some ways the heart of this great town, is a church of infinite fascination from the great tympanum of its west front, the flying buttresses that support its great apse, seen as no other apse and buttresses are seen from the banks of the Ile St. Louis, the dim light which at first is darkness of its vast interior, the red rose of its south window, the violet rose of its northern one, the sculptured walls of its choir, the long lines of its clerestory, the view from its towers, the strange population of birds and beasts, the birds and beasts and men and women too of nightmares, which shelter on its exterior, and over all, leaning from the topmost parapet of the Tower, looking for ever down upon the city, the Devil himself.

Through the long centuries that Paris has lived, has sinned and atoned, has rioted and endured, always the Devil has watched above on his tower. The long dead masons who built the church, to the honour of God and Our Lady, themselves put the Devil on the tower, a living force of definite personality to them. No record tells us why. But the verse where the Devil takes Him up into a high place to see "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" returns obstinately into one's head.

For the glory of Paris is indeed here, spread out below and all around. The shimmering line of the river, the two hills, the dome of the Institute, the spread of house-roofs like a slate-blue sea, bearing on its swelling surface the pointed spires, the grey towers round or square which rise out of it as the masts of ships from the water. The Devil, his face turned westward, watches too.

Below in the dim nave the three-foot doll of stone, the great wonder-working image of the Middle Ages, Our

Lady of Paris in a star-spangled gown, stands on her altar, and between all the beauty and the power of the cathedral. And all from the hands and the minds of the same makers. To sit below in the darkness of the nave, the doll Madonna crowned, jewelled, on one side, the violet rose of the northern window in front, the red rose of the southern window behind, the great grey pillars reaching upwards in the twilight, is to sit and see the belief and the superstition, the deeps and shallows, the greatness and the limit of the mediaeval mind.

We often came and sat here, till we not only saw but felt the building, the intense expression of a living personality; we came to the cathedral often, at all times, morning, noon, and dusk, on the short pale afternoons of winter, at the blazing noon of summer; we saw it "en grande fête," or when, save for beggars and chair vendors, it was left to silence and to us. I have even kissed the sacred relic.

Richard drew the line here from conscientious and hygienic scruples, but I wanted to see (and without paying for it) the crown which St. Louis prized above his own, that crown of thorns which the Sainte Chapelle was raised worthily to enshrine, which the people of Paris have come to adore, believing or unbelieving, through seven long centuries. I wanted to see a real relic of undoubted holiness, if belief makes holy, and what else can? I wanted to see how this brown circlet of dead wood, believed in so passionately by the great king, so passionately and for so long by his people, in spite of all such obstacles to faith as probability, the existence even of half another crown, I wanted to see just how it looked. And I was deeply interested in St. Louis, that embodiment of kingship and of saintship more lovable than can be found elsewhere, the perfect expression of his time and state, and with it all and through it all so characteristically French.

The holy relics are shown on Fridays in Lent. The faithful gather in rows about the rounded railings of the choir. The front row kneels. Priests in laced surplices, the relics in glass boxes on cushions in their hands, pass along the inside of the choir. Each kneeling figure kisses the glass box as it comes, the priests rub rapidly with a duster, it is kissed again, and the second row of waiting worshippers takes the place of the first.

It was not until I was well wedged into the crowd in the second row that I could see at all what happened. The rub of the duster on the top of the glass boxes (two of them, one for the crown, one for the piece of the true cross) was so rapid, the cloth was so small and so screwed into the hand of the priest, that the action was almost imperceptible. Only when I came to the front row myself and could watch the two priests coming along down the line behind the choir railings did I realise how this showing of the relics to the faithful was really managed.

The priest who carried the glass box of the cross was small, and dark, and oily, and totally disinterested. His eyes were everywhere but on the relic, and the action of wiping away the kisses of the faithful was perfunctory and at random. The priest who carried the larger box of the crown was large and fat, with a thick neck, double chin, and rolls of superfluous flesh lying on the collar of his "soutane." He had little pig's eyes and was very much out of breath. Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead, or starting on the puffy ridges underneath his eyes rolled slowly down each immense expanse of flat fleshy cheek. He wiped his glass box with the action of an automaton, the hand that held the duster hovering close against the head of the kneeling worshipper who stooped to kiss.

The duster somehow entirely disconcerted me. An hygienic precaution imposed perhaps by the secular authority, but as carried out hopelessly inadequate, and

destructively incongruent with belief in the relic itself.

The small priest and the fat priest came down the row towards me. Between kiss and kiss not a moment was wasted. The rapid perfunctory rub of the glass lid, that was all. And between rub and rub the interval was even shorter.

I was at the end of the row. The small dark priest with the cross, his eyes straying over the church, was so unattending that he cut off the devoutly praying lady next to me, turning round before he reached us. I missed the kiss, which I did not regret, and all I saw was a dark brown something lying on a cloth at the bottom of the box.

The big fat priest, two kisses behind his colleague, came to the very end of the row. I saw the podgy hand which clutched the duster was oozing sweat, and was not too clean. I could see the large fat thumb against the glass side of the box. The kind of warm oiliness of his presence pervaded the air. The worshipper next me kissed the lid with fervour. I could hear the glass squeak as the much-used duster, now probably moist, rubbed over it. And then it was thrust under my lips. Avoiding the thumb I stooped till I could reach the side of the box and apparently kissed that. If my kiss did not touch the actual glass of the box it came near enough to satisfy appearances. The top was rubbed just the same, and the fat priest without pause turned to begin at the other end of the row again.

My place was instantly taken by one of the waiting crowd, and the annual showing of the relics to the faithful continued without pause. Dark priest and fat priest with the holy cross and the holy crown were coming along up the kneeling line of worshippers, and the press of waiting ones was as great as ever.

I stood outside them all in the dark body of the church, the richer by an experience in ecclesiastical management

and for having caught sight of some dead wood in a glass box.

Accident or design the faithful are obliged to take the sight of the holy relics practically on trust. They can kiss them, the glass lid of their boxes, but scarcely see them. I didn't anyway, though I went to see.

It is still part of the ceremonial at Notre Dame when the archbishop is present at Mass for the faithful, especially those with children and ailing children, to line up between the choir and the vestry that the archbishop, as he goes in procession to disrobe after Mass, may bless them and lay hands on the children.

The Archbishop of Paris was an old man with every sign of age, falling mouth, lined cheeks, and that peculiar light look in the eyes from which all colouring has receded. He had the big nose of the ecclesiastic, and he came along very slowly, two fingers raised to bless.

The ring of the wooden handle of the Suisse's halberd upon the stone pavement, as that majestic man in his chains and coat of office, his plush breeches, his red cloak and golden tassels came along stamping it in front of the procession, made a vocal though unsaid, "Make way. Make way."

Everybody within the ambulatory drew up on one side or the other leaving a pathway clear. The little choir boys in their red cassocks and their short lace surplices came first, the assistants behind, still swinging censers, and then priests and dignitaries in purple and fine linen, till at the end, alone, after an empty space, the archbishop supported by two priests.

He was very slow in coming, and he turned from left to right along the line. The grown-ups, mostly women, did a kind of village bob as he passed, pushing the children in front of them. When he saw a child the hand with the fingers held up in blessing for the parents came

wavering down on the top of the child's head. I do not think the old man could really see because the attendants on either side were obviously directing him, and he got more and more behind the rest of the procession as he went along. In front of me he stopped, and seeming to think that my hand which rested on an umbrella was a child put his own to touch it. He was a tall old man, and even bent his head was far above mine.

"Que Dieu vous bénisse," he said.

And then the attendants steered him gently on, and the waiting child next me got no blessing. The mother was mortified even to tears.

"Et chétif comme il est," she said, "le pauvre petit bonhomme."

I began to ask her if the touch of the archbishop would have made him stronger, but the "pauvre petit bonhomme" insisting on being taken out to eat the "gâteau" he had been promised for keeping good, I never heard.

Every French person I have questioned on the subject says, "Certainly not, no one believes the Archbishop of Paris can cure illness by touching." But there the mothers stand and the ailing children, though it may be only the desire to get an extra efficacious blessing for a sick child which brings them there.

I saw the archbishop once again at the Fête of the Beatification of Joan of Arc, the first stage towards sainthood. On merit alone Joan has waited long for her saintship, far longer than St. Francis of Sales or St. Vincent de Paul. One gathers from the controversy that it was political and largely anti-feminist considerations which have kept her so long unsainted. As Zola said of the Academy:

"D'autant qu'il y en a une, je dois en être" (So long as there is one I ought to be there).

But otherwise official sainthood cannot add one ray to the halo of Joan's glory, perhaps the most marvellous authenticated story of the achievement of the impossible that ever happened. Not one incident in it but is documented like a law suit (better than most), and yet all on the face of them incredible. Put back a few hundred years, and there is not an historian who would not consider it legend. But there was gathered up in this young girl, this ignorant, poor, despised peasant girl who kept sheep on the last undulating slopes of the Vosges, near the obscure village of Domremy, the force which moves the world and makes mankind even as the Gods.

The village of Domremy-la-Pucelle, where an ugly poverty seems to struggle daily for existence, is of all the villages in France the one which made upon me the most painful and ineffaceable impression. Villages are not picturesque (though mostly prosperous) in France as they frequently are in England. There are no rose-covered porches, no flower gardens between road and cottages, no railings to divide them from the dust of the street, and always the refuse and litter of agricultural life close up to the houses and very visible from the roadway. But though flowers and picturesqueness are lacking, solid prosperity and well-being are generally obvious. The houses will be well built and well cared for, but the houses of Domremy-la-Pucelle and of Domremy-Macy-sur-Meuse, the village one passes through to reach it from the nearest railway station, are dirty, slovenly, and have a starved and ill-kept air.

The house where Joan herself was born lies a little outside the village, next to the graveyard of the church. It is, as far as human things can be, much as it was when she lived in it.¹ It is built of huge blocks of roughly cut

¹ The latest historians declare the house was rebuilt in 1480, fifty years after Joan's death.

stone, has only three rooms, with oblong openings for windows. The arms of the family, azure, on two fleurs de lis or, a sword argent with hilt or, conferred upon them with the name of du Lis just before the betrayal of Jeanne, are carved above the stone lintel of the door. You enter straight into the living-kitchen-best-bedroom of the house, with its large cowed stone chimney. Here Joan was born. Here the family lived. Here her parents slept. The room is bare now. The little furniture it then contained gone. The fire on the large hearthstone which gave it life put out. Only the inadequate beginnings of a small museum are set out coldly in their glass cases. The floor like the walls is made of stone. A bad bust of Joan looks down from them.

Opening out of this is a narrow stone cell with, against the wall, a long block of stone on which Joan's bed was made. Beyond the bed, in the stone wall of the back of the house, an oblong opening was pierced which gave light and air, and also rain and cold, to the room. Through this at all times as she lay Jeanne could look across the graveyard to the church itself. And here she saw her visions. Here between church and house St. Catherine and St. Marguerite appeared to her: and the great archangel Michael bent down from heaven above.

The effect of the building is almost that of a Stone-Age shelter, of a Celtic dolmen turned to human use. It is so nearly made of just four large stones.

The house belongs now to the nation. There is a guardian in attendance, a book to be signed, but as in most French national monuments nothing to be paid. It seems to be very little visited, being about half a day's journey from the nearest town where travellers can stay, and that a town of mere local importance and quite away from the main routes of travel. Domremy is even remoter now than it was in the days of Jeanne, when

Vaucouleurs was an important military post on the Burgundian frontier.

When I used to read of Domremy as "a little village on the slopes of the Vosges," its traditional description, I always thought of it as a hillside village with the Vosges rising tall and blue above it. Physiographically this may be a perfectly true description, but it conveys an entirely false idea. No hills rise above Domremy, and the Vosges are too far away to be distinguished at all on what was when I was there a fine though rather grey day. Instead, on all save one side lies a great plain and on that one only a gentle green undulation which is the last spent ripple of the far-away hills.

We walked in the meadow where tradition says Joan kept her sheep. Most probably the communal village sheep of Domremy, though she herself laid stress upon her sewing and spinning and household duties. It was here she heard those voices from the Heaven she believed so near above calling her to save her country.

All the controversy that has raged around her, from the witch-obsessed advocates of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, through the rationalists of the eighteenth, to the last materialists of to-day or yesterday, has never succeeded in obscuring the wonder of her story, so simple and so strange. And the words of Michelet, just because they so reflect the simplicity and the wonder, have long since become classic, "*Il venait une fille.*"

To the witch-ridden sixteenth century Joan's history seemed simply Satanic, to the Encyclopaedists madness or hypocrisy, to the scientists of the nineteenth delusion, and to all an uncomfortable inconvenient fact which remained for all their saying still a fact. So it was not till the twentieth century came that Joan's Catholic countrymen thought to ask from their Church for that recognition to which none could have a greater claim.

The first step to saintship is Beatification, and this was conferred on Joan in the first years of this century. The celebration of this Beatification was held in Notre Dame in a curious and very beautiful ceremony.

The archbishop and all the church dignitaries of Paris assisted at the Mass. The sermon was preached by the most noted French preacher of his day, and from each corner of the clerestory two silver trumpets sounded down the aisles. Never have I heard a musical effect so unforgettable as those silver trumpets in the vast spaces of Notre Dame. They rang with a tone outside of ordinary music, as different as though coming from another sphere, or through another medium than that of air. And the long echoes that went on dying among the pillars of the church, fainter, fainter, fainter, till the verge of sound and silence met and stayed. It was wonderful. It rapt one up into ecstasy.

We were amongst the undistinguished crowd, far away from the service in the choir, which indeed we could see but vaguely. But when the high dignitaries in procession came out of the choir and down the church to sit near the pulpit against its pillar in the nave, then we found ourselves quite near them. The archbishop was in all his ecclesiastical splendour, pastoral staff, shoes, gloves, ring, robes, everything, and the train of stoled and surpliced clergy behind him gleamed with rich embroideries and the white cobwebs of exquisite lace.

The sermon was preached by the most eloquent Jesuit father of his day, a slight, supple man in a long straight robe of violet silk, with a fine-wrought silver crucifix on his breast. There was much more rhetoric than thought, it seemed to me, in what he said, but the manner of his saying it, his words, his voice, his gestures, the betrayal and the restraint of emotion were beyond praise. It was long. I recollect absolutely nothing of

what he said concerning the subject-matter of his sermon, Joan, but two things I do remember.

We all see God in our own image, and perceive Him within our limitations, but I was struck with this as with an entirely new conception in the dramatic scene which he made of a meeting between Jesus and His mother. All the little touches which he added (they were not many in number) to the actual matter of the texts were essentially and characteristically French, French of the traditional "Ma mère, mon fils" type. Impossible to conceive of any of them occurring to the mind of an Englishman.

The other remark was less national, but still more strange. He had grown eloquent upon the power and beauty of Christianity, from the great deeds of Joan he had passed rapidly through those of other believers, till he came to the Great Exemplar Himself, and to clinch Christ's great superiority above that of other founders of great Faiths, "Mahomet et . . . et les autres," as he put it (with an obvious lack of knowledge as to who or what "les autres" were), he said:

"Of all these, il n'y a que Jésus Christ qui aurait pu être Catholique."

Indeed, a separating and a magnifying of the Church above even its own God.

As for Joan, she, I fear, got almost lost in the glorification of "The one and only Church." It is not the eloquence of the preacher that remains to me, but his figure, uplifted above the crowded mass of heads which filled the church, the slim violet figure with the silver Christ outstretched upon its breast, and behind, the massive pillars of Notre Dame.

And of all the pageant, of the lights, the incense, the colour, the dignitaries in embroidered robes, the old archbishop in all the insignia of his high office, of the organ music and the choir boys chanting, what remains un-

forgettable is the sounding of the silver trumpets along the echoing aisles.

There was another music I heard in Paris, another music in a church which I can never forget either, but there was pain here mixed with pleasure which made its poignancy almost unbearable. To Richard quite unbearable. He went once but never again. I went several times, for the beauty was undeniable, and for its sake I could endure the haunting ring of pain.

This music, now silenced in Paris by the expulsion of the religious orders, was the vesper chant of the nuns who forever adore and pray before the Sacred Heart. One black-robed figure, outstretched upon the pavement of their chapel, prays always for the sins which pierce Christ's heart afresh.

An immense square-holed iron grating divided the chapel of the convent from the little church where outsiders came to pray. It was entered first through a doorway in a long white wall, and then by the church's doorway in a little high-walled court, and so not a sound of Paris penetrated within the church. The convent chapel was as the choir of the church, a large and lofty choir with stalls for all the nuns. The people's church was but the nave, a little short nave without ornament, like a very high square room.

Through the double square-holed grating, whose squares cut each other and did not coincide, outlines were dim and always as though blurred. The prone black figure praying on the pavement, the hanging red of the burning lamp, the black forms filling all the stalls were like shadows, uncertain shadows with a blurred unfocussed outline. And they had neither face nor figure these shadows, but were as straight black patches indistinct yet hiding each a human soul within.

- This was the convent of a strict monastic rule where

life was spent in discipline and prayer; monastic discipline where body is the mortal enemy of soul and its suffering a pleasure to the sufferer's God. This, too, was a convent which had kept, a thing rarely heard to-day, the true Gregorian plain song for its offices. It was this which brought me there. And when the black shadows filled the stalls each side of that black shadow on the pavement, the very shadow of the Cross, an eerie feeling filled the chapel, these were not quick but dead.

Then through the double grating rose crystal clear the plain Gregorian chant by voices each one faint, half weary, all as without sex or life. Strange, unhuman, beautiful voices in whose every note the broken body and the bruised obedient spirit spoke. Sweet, clear, frail, unhuman voices starved of all mortality, soaring as a bird would soar on a broken wing, and yet so beautiful.

"I want to smash the grating down and bring them out," said Richard. "Dead things who ought to be live women."

But there was undoubted beauty in that death, a poignant, painful beauty with the charm of the Beyond. It set me wondering.

The beauty was undeniable, was something gained then to set against all this loss? And was that gain worth while? And again the loss was real, was the gain real too? And I found myself wandering suddenly in the dark and difficult places of the soul. And the great question of all the questions barred like a flaming sword the path of life.

Are man's senses the sole measure of the real? And if not, if the immaterial exists at all should one seek to see it? And seek to see it at the expense of the material? I have wandered in the dark of this difficult question many years. The complete answer I still must seek. But slowly, gradually, with many stumblings and uncertainties it has come to me, that just as the practice of

and belief in magic was a fraudulent assault on natural laws, an unlawful attempt to take knowledge by fraud or force not by effort, so the persecution of the body, the taking of lives from the current of life, the denial of all human obligations, is equally an attempt to take knowledge, knowledge of the immaterial, illegitimately, by force or fraud. To take it against law instead of by law. It is the short cut leading to disaster. The kingdom of Heaven cannot be taken by assault neither can it be undermined. The great mystics themselves seem to have had a suspicion of this, for we read that St. Theresa, the psychologist among the mystics, herself carefully distinguished between false ecstasy and true, between hallucination and oneness with God. Might not this real distinction have its root in the methods taken to attain the end? And in so far as the mystic's ecstasy was due to the injuring of the body, it was a false ecstasy, and in so far as it was due to the absorption of the mind in what is highest, in the Immaterial and the Supreme, it was true? Only the doctrine of the Fall and that wrongly interpreted ever made of the body the enemy of the soul, its prison not its dwelling place. And curiously the agony of the crucifixion, pain not self-given, contrived to swallow up the authentic teaching of that Founder who "came eating and drinking."

Within the history of Christianity, the growth and the dominance of a dogma of pain can be clearly traced. The reduction of material claims to their smallest dimensions with which it was frequently confounded is really another and a very different matter.

St. Sulpice too is renowned for its plain song, but a plain song no longer pure Gregorian, but full of later adaptations and adornments. It is still called Gregorian to distinguish it from other chants and is very popular.

St. Sulpice is the ecclesiastical centre of the left bank,

with its square surrounded with shops selling "articles de piété," and then its seminary, since closed. Its services are popular and at Mass on Sundays it is always full. And the warmth of its music and the belief of its faithful create a thin envelope of religious atmosphere in a church utterly devoid of it.

As a building St. Sulpice has all the faults of its period, the "fin du grand siècle," and its grandiose coldness is architecturally akin to the big bag periwig. Its ornaments are mostly eighteenth-century artificialities of the most deplorable type; of which artificialities the yellow lighted statue of the Virgin in the Lady Chapel stands out in bad pre-eminence.

I used to go to Mass here sometimes for the sake of the music and the preaching, which is also celebrated. But religious oratory, official religious oratory, anyway in my time, must have fallen on evil days if I can judge at all by the sermons I heard. When they did not remind me of the building they reminded me of the statue, which was worse. The sweep and the hard grit of a Bossuet, and the burning passion, a little sentimental, of a Lacordaire were alike absent.

Yet I have pleasant memories of St. Sulpice. We went by it so often, it was so part of our Paris. Its square has a charm difficult to translate and its two different towers are a landmark in the city. It was in St. Sulpice too that we saw weddings "en gros" instead of in detail. Six couples were married at once.

Each was seated with its respective wedding guests on velvet chairs in six side chapels while from the High Altar the one service was conducted. At the conclusion of the wholesale part of the ceremony the priest went round to each chapel and finished off the six marriages in turn. This form of co-operative church wedding comes much cheaper than having an individual one for each couple, and is therefore much favoured by the

thrifty French bourgeoisie who have anyhow to pay two fees, a civil and a religious one, if they wish to be married, as most of them do, in church. So at St. Sulpice one day in the week is set apart for weddings of this kind, and the demand is so great they are not difficult to arrange.

The bride and bridegroom sat side by side on velvet chairs in front of the altar chapel all through the ceremony. The wedding guests sat behind. They could none of them see the High Altar or I think have heard very distinctly the Latin words of the service. It was a very plain ceremony without any expensive additions in the way of blessed candles, acolytes, red carpet, or song. And the priest seemed bent only on the business of getting it done.

It was at St. Sulpice too that I saw a really magnificent funeral with all the trappings of a Catholic burial service. A funeral where the coffin lay in state on trestles in the middle of the nave, where all the church was hung with black and silver drapery, where all the mourners, relations, friends, and guests, and after them the congregation whoever chose, passed round the coffin sprinkling holy water from a sort of silver syringe upon it, each in turn handing it on to the next comer, even to the inevitable loafer whom every crowd attracts. It took, as may be imagined, an enormously long time, although there were two syringes on each side of the coffin.

After the church ceremony the relations, friends, and guests follow the coffin to the cemetery, the women in carriages (these are usually only the immediate relations), the men on foot and bareheaded. It is often said in Paris that the funeral of one celebrity always leads to the death of several more, for they take cold in the long walk bareheaded behind the bier to the graveyard. Every one along the street who meets or passes the hearse salutes it. The men remove their hats, the women frequently cross themselves.

Funerals are far more ceremonious affairs in France than with us. To begin with notices called "faire part" are sent out to people with only the slightest acquaintance with any one of the relations of the deceased. This "faire part" comes in a large white envelope with an inch deep black border. The large double-paged letter paper inside has a black border also an inch deep and is printed in the blackest ink. It is headed usually by a capital M with often a cross above it. Then underneath come all the names of all the relations, the heads of families to the fifth degree. This will sometimes take up fifteen lines of print, and will run like this:

"Monsieur Louis Delille, membre de l'Institut, Monsieur et Madame Frédéric Dubois et leurs enfants, Madame veuve Gary ses enfants et ses petits-enfants, Mademoiselle Hortense de Liantour, Monsieur et Madame Charles Potin et leurs enfants" (and so on until all the immediate family in all its ramifications has been enumerated, and winding up with) "Et les familles Clairemont de Vigné, Marcel, Dubois, etc." (who are only connections). These

"Have the sadness to acquaint you (vous faire part) with the loss that they have just suffered in the person of (this very big and right across the page)

Madame Louis Delille

Born Marie Hortense Potin

their wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, sister-in-law, aunt, cousin, who died suddenly at her home in the rue Basse at Paris in her 76th year, on the 8th of November, 19—.

"The Burial will take place at the cemetery of Montmartre."

In the same way mourning is very much more usual, more worn, worn deeper and for a longer time than with us. Long thick crêpe veils such as we only used to see on widows' bonnets are put on for second cousins or even for remoter relations as "first mourning." The cashmere shawl (black), long since passed out of fashion here,

is still much used in France for mourning. It is worn just as in the old plates and fastened in front with a large funereal brooch of hair, or weeping willow, or a cameo with an inverted torch and an urn. To see a whole family in black cashmere shawls fastened with these funereal brooches, and veiled in their crêpe veils often dropped right over the face and completely hiding it, is indeed to see the trappings of woe.

Another interesting peculiarity of French funerals and of French graveyards is the number of bead wreaths. In some cases these entirely displace flowers; in all cases they exceed them. And amongst flowers one has to count immortelles. These bead flower wreaths are so ugly their favour in France always surprised me. It surprises still and I cannot quite account for it, but perhaps thrift (they last longer) acting on the very much more prevalent and certainly more active cult of the dead may explain it. An untended, a flowerless grave is something of a slur on the family to whom it belongs. Obviously to put fresh flowers on a grave continually is both more expensive in money and in time than to put on a bead wreath. So the bead wreath wins. Growing flowers seem first to have been displaced by immortelles, and these in their turn to have given way before the far more permanent and certainly uglier bead flowers.

A visit to a French cemetery reveals these in their thousands. Even in Paris the cult of All Souls' day is something of a reality. If candles are not lighted upon the graves as they still are in parts of Brittany and Provence, the cemeteries are full of families bringing fresh wreaths to lay upon the graves, and the mortuary chapels, usually so dreary and empty, are warm with burning lights and praying families. On All Souls' day, in fact, the French family pays a visit to its dead as on New Year's day it pays one to the living. It seems always

to put on mourning to do so. For everybody is always in black, and everybody cannot always be in the first freshness of their mourning. The graves alone deny that.

We went to Père-la-Chaise once on All Souls' day and found the cemetery, for all its size, black with people. Down the main allées they were passing in a never-ending stream. Many seemed to have no graves of their own to visit, but to have come there simply to pay respect to the dead generally, and because it was "the thing." The impression the whole place made upon me was not happy. The bead wreaths, the ugly tombs; the private ones usually a small heavy chapel with a galiled front closed with a grating, or a door with a yellow glass eyehole in the form of a cross. Inside can be seen a small stone altar with artificial flowers, sometimes a "prie-Dieu" for the relations, and always everywhere on the graves the bead wreaths. If immortelles are used they are generally inside a glass case. Natural flowers, cut or growing, are so rare as to be almost non-existent. In spite of the old avenues of limes and chestnuts which have never been cut down since Père-la-Chaise became a cemetery, the effect is miles and miles of crowded stone monuments as much without green grass or growing flowers or trees as the streets of the city itself.

To find any particular grave is almost to search for a particular blade of grass in a hayfield, but just by wandering we did pass, I remember, the grave of Chopin, and the tomb where Abélard and Héloïse still lie. This is more effective than most of the public tombs or monuments, and, wonder of wonders, it will sometimes have fresh flowers, brought there by unhappy lovers from the modern Paris where they live. The memory of Abélard and Héloïse, the lovers, still endures as the flowers testify; even from time to time the dead body of a heart-broken lover who has chosen this place to die in.

A curious commentary on the French cult of the dead,

and a singularly barbaric one, is to be found at the Val de Grâce. To this church, which was raised by the mother of Louis XIV. after his birth in fulfilment of her vow (for Louis was born after twenty-three years of sterile married life and his mother, France, he himself, regarded his advent as an authentic miracle, a thing which explains so much both in his career and his character)—to this church, then, was brought in a solemn, ceremonious procession the twenty-six hearts of the royal personages of France; their bodies lay at St. Denis, but to the Val de Grâce their hearts were brought. Later on Anne herself carried with her own hands the heart of her granddaughter Anne Elizabeth. Her own was placed here; and here in that one black year those of the three Dauphins of France, the son, the grandson, and the great-grandson of Louis.

Saint Simon in his *Mémoires* tells of a curious incident in this extraordinary cult. At the funeral Mass of the "Grande Mademoiselle" in 1693 the urn which contained her entrails suddenly broke apart and filled all the chapel with a horrible smell. In spite of the solemnity of the occasion and the presence of royalty, everybody rushed to the doors "à cause de la puanteur subite et intolérable." It was only after thorough perfuming that the ceremony could proceed. These entrails were taken to the Célestins, the heart of Mademoiselle to the Val de Grâce, and the body to St. Denis. And this happened almost in the eighteenth century.

The Val de Grâce itself, the "temple au Seigneur" of Anne's vow, still stands. All its decorations bear on the birth of Jesus in allusion to that of Louis, while its dome and its altar are both reproductions on a small scale of those of St. Peter's at Rome. Here the daughter of our Charles I. was buried, over whom Bossuet spoke one of the most famous and most beautiful of his funeral orations.

The word "temple" meaning church is still current in France, but it is confined now exclusively to Protestant churches. Catholic churches are "églises," but Protestant ones are "temples," as those of the heathen.

At times when our food could afford it we would go to the theatre. This had to be paid for, of course; 5*d.* each at the Odéon, gallery seats; 10*d.* at the Comédie Française; as much as 1*s.* 8*d.* perhaps if we went to any of the private theatres, and so had to be afforded with some care. When boots did not want soleing, or there had been no run on stationery, or mending wool and cotton, or trams, and we found ourselves in full possession of our full food budget for a day or so, we instantly began to think of skimming 10*d.* off it for a theatre. It was 10*d.* more often than anything else, because that was less difficult to take out of our food than even the 1*s.* 8*d.* necessary for the Française. Also the Odéon was much nearer and more our own. I cannot say the 5*d.* seats were "replete with every luxury." There was something to sit on, hard and backless, and from the front row though high up one saw pretty well. But they were not nearly so bad as the very much higher priced seats reserved, Upper Circle (price anyhow) type at many of the private theatres, which are simply vile, and at the state theatres anyhow there is always ample breathing space and moving room behind each tier of seats. The Française is more spacious and luxurious than the Odéon, but so are the prices, and the Odéon in our time had several dawning stars which have since risen upon the theatrical world. Madame Segond-Weber, for instance, was leading tragic lady at the Odéon when we went there, and her Agrippine, her Andromaque, but above all her Athalie remain indelible.

Both the Odéon and the Française have set series of classical plays besides the usual Thursday matinées,

which are always given with an eye to the school half-holiday and so with matter suitable "pour les jeunes filles"; and one year we took an "abonnement" at the Odéon for a whole winter series. We got twenty performances for 15 fr. (12s. 6d.) in good reserved Dress Circle seats, and at each performance there were at least two plays, sometimes three or four. The twenty performances, in fact, gave us many more than twice twenty plays, it gave us nearly all Molière, most of Racine, the best of Corneille, with, coming up the centuries, Le Sage, Voltaire, Diderot, Beaumarchais, with even some of the classics of the nineteenth century: in fact almost everything that would find a place in a history of literature. Indeed it was a short account of the French drama acted instead of written. Imagine if in London we had a theatre where for 12s. 6d. one could go once a week and see Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, Goldsmith, Sheridan, right up to, say, Lytton and Robertson. Moreover, each week the theatre was quite full.

The performances were always adequate, not always distinguished. Except in favourite parts the reputations did not appear. In some ways one got a truer idea of the value and the balance of the plays as plays than one can often do when the strong personality of an experienced actor comes between you and one person in the drama. And the thing I took away from all of them, classics of the Grand Siècle, of the Age of Reason, of the early nineteenth century, as I took it away indeed from even the modernest farce on the boulevard, was that sense of a thing well made, of good craftsmanship, whether good drama or not, good craftsmanship, well finished, with always the mark of a fine intelligence, delicate, sharpened, upon it; though it might be immoral or Rabelaisian.

It is a little curious to reflect that though the French

modern drama needs bowdlerising for the English stage, their classical drama wants no editing, while much of ours is not only coarse and indecent in expression, but so much so in substance and plot as to make it quite unpresentable to modern audiences. We in fact have already done as badly as a nation could in this direction and mostly without the saving grace of wit.

Besides our "abonnement" we saw at the Odéon during our time in Paris most of Victor Hugo, Racine's *Athalie* with the Colonne orchestra, a striking performance, and Daudet's play founded on his short story of *L'Arlésienne* with Bizet music, where something of the charm of the "Midi" does get over the footlights. And between the Odéon and the Française we took our history of the drama right up to the twentieth century, at the Française to the productions of the playwrights of the moment.

A real theatrical sensation to me was seeing De Musset's *On ne badine pas avec l'Amour*, which begins apparently as a kind of comic opera with a very French touch as to its morals and ends in tragedy and a problem. I sat still on my hard seat, staring at the curtain, passionately longing for it to go up and the play to begin all over again that I might see what it meant this time, unable to speak or think of anything else, with the sensation of having been mentally tossed in a blanket, as it were, and not very sure which side I had come down.

It was at the Française too that we saw *Œdipe Roi*, the French *Œdipus Rex* in so excellent a translation that it has passed into the répertoire of the Française. We saw it with Mounet-Sully as Œdipus. That too was unforgettable. No Reinhardt effects of long gangways, of uplifted masses of bare arms, no realistic (!) plunging down palace steps, no crudely reddened eye-sockets. The simple severity of the French classic heightened if possible; little decoration, no supers, even few gestures,

but a tragic intensity that lay a deep oppression on the house. So quiet, so inevitable, so intense, the great figure of Destiny unseen was real to us as to those for whom it was written. And the absence of movement and subordinate figures left space as it were upon the stage for that great unseen protagonist who fills and is Greek drama.

Mounet-Sully's gestures were superb, more regal than a king's, a dignity that remained inalienable to the awful end, such dignity as could make endurable the physical horrors of the play and enhance its spiritual tragedy; and preserve for me the feeling that this was great Art fulfilling itself, and in the words of Aristotle "purging the heart by fear and emotion."

This was my first introduction to the Greek drama acted and gave me a strong belief, kept in spite of some subsequent shocks, as to its actual dramatic value even to-day.

Before the *Œdipus* had come a little work of Coppée's modern to topicality: the defence of a striker, an old man on his trial. The piece is practically a monologue, just the story as told by the old man himself in court. It was a marvellous piece of acting and Mounet-Sully was as convincing in this modernest of tragedies as in the far-away Greek one which came after it.

At the Française too we saw Murger's *Bonhomme Jadis*, one of the stock one-act pieces of French comedy, which if you can accept the peculiar angle of French morality is really the charming idyllic love story they find it.

The young hero of the play is a student of the Latin Quarter, who at the age of twenty-two confesses shyly he has never had a mistress; so the kindly old man to whom the confession is made, who is very surprised and a good deal amused at such an omission, helps him to repair it at once, and then on quite a side issue (she

resembles his mother or something) he endows the heroine, a little work-girl who lives on the floor below, with a "dot," that the young man can make love to her legitimately instead of illegitimately.

This gave me much to think about. I watched the effect on the audience around me with some care. Their attitude towards the hero's shy confession seemed much that of the kindly old man himself, and when he carefully arranged opportunities for the two to make love, with sentimental remarks on "l'amour" and "la jeunesse," it was accepted with applause as quite in the spirit of kindliness in which it was done. And finally when the old man provides the dot and the two are left with joined hands before the portrait of his mother, legal marriage ahead, the sentimental heart of the theatre-goer (gallery) was touched even to tears, and the French equivalent for "Sweetly pretty" sprang to all lips.

It was while we were in Paris that Henri Lavedan's play of *Don Juan* was first produced. It created a great sensation at the time, "all Paris" talked of it, the newspapers hailed it as great art, so we went to see it. Of course there was art, it wouldn't be French if there wasn't, but where the greatness came in I failed to see. It was just the story of a successful aristocratic Don Juan brought in contact with an, up to then, virtuous lady who succumbs when he shows her indecent illustrated books (the trump card he keeps up his sleeve for such occasions, and always, he says, with success), and whom in order to gain better he then refuses. This was the great scene. Also the play's claim to great art. Its entire originality, and its altogether wonderful psychology and consummate dramatic touch were belauded in every newspaper. The theatre seemed filled with very average men and women when we were there, but I found afterwards that a boycott did exist in Paris towards it.

This was one of my most curious discoveries. When I came to know some of the wives of the Sorbonne professors and meet their friends, it puzzled me to understand how these men and women whom I met and knew could like that kind of play or similar kinds of books. I began to wonder whether they did, really, truly did. So one day I asked.

It was, I remember, at an afternoon call a little late in the afternoon when the more or less sympathetic souls had drawn together, or as much together as the formal lines of chairs each side the fireplace allowed, and a feeling of confidence was in the air, I asked my hostess if she had seen Lavedan's play. There followed the kind of silence after the name which falls in any society when some one mentions the unmentionable. And then my hostess, a little used by this time to the sort of metaphorical china-breaking her acquaintance with outlandish foreigners with strange moral standards and manners entailed, replied as charmingly natural and friendly as ever:

"Why, no, of course not! We," with a glance round the circle, "don't go to that kind of thing."

Then I unfolded the great question which puzzled me so much; would they tell me whose works in modern French literature they actually did see and read? I had been given by my professors certain names of modern French writers and had studied their works, and I was puzzled. Would they tell me what they really did read?

Of course they would, with all the pleasure in the world. Well, they read Tolstoi (Russian, I said in brackets) and Ibsen (Norwegian) and Hauptmann (German) and Kipling (English), and some of them read Tourguénieff and Sudermann, and others read Hardy and Meredith, and of course there was "L'Abbé Constantin" (always and everywhere does one encounter L'Abbé Constantin in such relations), and *Cyrano de Bergerac*

and Anatole France. (This was just at the time of the famous Monsieur Bergeret series.)

I waited while the names dropped slowly out and when we got to the eighth foreigner suggested that I was supposed to be studying French literature. This gave them all a shock, and perhaps for the first time they rather woke up to the fact that they didn't, in truth, read so much modern French fiction. But just as we were within reach of the really interesting part of the subject, etiquette, which declares that when a new caller arrives the earliest one must leave, broke up the party.

This threw a curious light upon the puzzling ways of French literature. Here were French women of the cultured classes, the classes who would read literature too, and yet on the whole not reading the French literature of their time. Who did read it then? Was it produced within a tradition for a restricted circle of *littérateurs* and critics, and was that one reason why it was greatly as it was? And who read it? The critics, of course, and they naturally would tend to keep it inside its tradition. And who else? That was the puzzle. It was quite evident, however, that unless the Frenchwomen I knew were all exceptions, well-educated middle-class women, the "nice" women, did not go to plays like *Don Juan*, in spite of all the newspaper praise, and were even unpleasantly surprised that other women they knew should do so. . . . And yet these plays were not only written, but acted and drawing audiences in Paris. *Don Juan* did not run very long.

On the other hand there was a play produced at the Variétés which was not only the talk of the newspapers, but really of the town as well. It had a long run. It was extremely witty, and it hit hard at the government officials, a thing the French public loves. The Director of the "Beaux Arts" came into it, and also the Director's

wife, a lady of innumerable intrigues, but she was not really of the essence of the play. She was tacked on, an addition to suit that sort of taste, or to keep the play inside the literary tradition. Moreover, she was treated in the comic spirit. This play did draw "all Paris," professors' wives as well. Quite why such a distinction was made, whether owing to the wit, the broadly comic treatment of the intrigue, its really external relation to the play, or the satire on the Beaux Arts, I do not know. I must own, too, except at moments I enjoyed it enormously myself. To quote my next door neighbour, "it was 'impayable.' " And yet it gave me a great deal to reflect on and to puzzle over. As, for instance, the ruthless rapier fun made of a great government department and its chief, say the Home Office with Mr. McKenna at the time of the Suffragettes, and imagine all London rushing to see and to laugh at ridicule, caustic and irresistible, of that department and its chief.

Ridicule is a potent factor both in French life and in French thought, and one of the keenest and most effective weapons in the whole French armoury. Many reforms have been won by it, some lost. In fact the struggle often is just a struggle for the laughter of the people. Get that and the rest follows. So that wit is often the greatest asset a reformer can have. By it alone he will inspire belief and get a following, not evoke as with us a sort of dumb distrust and doubt of his real seriousness. We associate seriousness with gravity, not with the wit or the comic spirit, and we like each separately and carefully labelled that there may be no mistake; whereas in France no such distinction exists. No subject is above a jest, and no reform but can be bettered by one.

For instance, this is how a French newspaper starts a crusade for reforming the government monopoly of matches which are notoriously bad. It heads its article,

"Tout arrive . . . All comes . . ." with a sub-heading, "Hurrah! government matches are going to light!" and then goes on, "Everybody knows what a government match is. That little piece of wood, very thin, with which those who have nothing better to do amuse themselves trying to light their pipes or the fire. They rack their brains for every possible way of doing this. First they tickle the match. Then they rub it gently, afterwards they put it near a flame. But the match just laughs at these clumsy tricks. One can do everything possible, but the government match is not to be caught.

"The French taxpayer, who is a gentle, resigned, patient creature, has become accustomed, little by little, to these non-combustible matches. If they refuse obstinately to light, doubtless that is, he thinks, for his good. If they did would they not become a real public danger instead of being, as at present, the cause of amusement to babies and of perfect tranquillity and peace to parents?

"But now a surprising and disturbing piece of news reaches us. It appears that in certain circumstances the government match is actually liable to take fire just like any vulgar foreign match.

"Don't laugh. It is very serious. At sea the government match is actually INFLAMMABLE.

"What can be the cause of this phenomenon? The sea breezes, the ozone of the ocean, driving mists, do they provoke in the match the same disorders that they evoke in certain delicate constitutions? Is the match subject, in the course of a sea voyage, to a sort of irritation which sets up a vivid external inflammation, or does it get sea-sick and vomit fire? We do not know, and we are reduced to mere hypothesis.

"But there the fact is. Government matches once they journey by sea become combustible.

"And this has reduced the under-secretary for the Board of Trade to despair. It is now almost impossible

to find merchant vessels which will consent to ship government matches to Algeria and the colonies.

"‘Thank you,’ they say, ‘we don’t want to set fire to our ships. Keep your beautiful matches yourself.’

"What is to be done?

"It is of course absolutely necessary that the government match, symbol of our power and our civilisation, should reach our over-seas possessions, that it should be found in the shadowy oases of Africa, on the moving sand of the deserts, in the virgin forests of the extreme east. It is of paramount importance that cannibal niggers should learn to know and respect the Industries of our state. And they must learn too that if the Motherland makes matches it is for the pure pleasure of our public functionaries, not that they may light.

"Formal orders will, in consequence, be given to the state factories to see that their matches are as perfectly non-combustible on sea as on land . . . which is saying something."

I do not think we should try to reform, say, the telephone service quite in this manner, and probably the censor would prohibit plays which jested at government departments and cabinet ministers.

The Variétés where the play was given was a typical private commercial theatre, with simply appalling accommodation in all but the most expensive seats; as far below the average of our theatre accommodation as the state theatres are above it. And yet in spite of the comfort, not to say luxury, of the state theatres, in spite of their low prices, the commercial theatres can fill themselves quite full and are good business speculations.

I cannot say as a conclusion from what I saw, that the state theatre helps the rising playwright or the new idea (the new idea of fifty years ago perhaps), on the contrary rather, but what a state theatre does do is

to provide good theatrical fare at low prices, to set a standard, and above all to keep dramatic literature in being. It is something worth while to have all that is good in the drama of one's country, well acted and adequately produced. That is the function of a state theatre. And in France the state theatres fulfil their function adequately.

For new ideas and the rising playwright we went in my time to the Théâtre Antoine where Hauptmann's *Weavers*, Tolstoi, and such plays as the social tracts of M. Brieux first saw the Parisian light. "Young Paris," "the intellectuals," patronised the Antoine, and M. Antoine made such a name for himself that he was subsequently offered and accepted the directorship of the Odéon. Here if he could not give a sort of open stage to all the new ideas that dramatise, he could and did stage foreign classics and freshen up the lists of native ones.

One of the first things he did was to give more Shakespeare and better Shakespeare than Paris had ever had before. The "fatal bandeau" (handkerchief) of Othello, the nearest approach the eighteenth century could allow itself to anything so vulgar, with all the tradition it implied, was, of course, banished completely. But Shakespeare refuses really to be translated into French and remain Shakespeare, as much as La Fontaine refuses to be translated into English and remain La Fontaine, becoming merely an agreeable moral story writer of the Sunday-school variety. At least that is my feeling. The genius of each nation is against it. Yet the study of English poets by French men of letters is quite a sign of the times.

Perhaps the Frenchest part of the French theatre is the institution of the Foyer. Here in a beautifully decorated hall where busts or pictures of the great dramatists and actors of France look down on the passing crowd, all the theatre from stalls to gallery comes to

walk and talk and look between the acts. At least one interval, though generally more, is considerably longer than the others, which allows of the whole theatre emptying itself into the Foyer, walking up and down, smoking perhaps or getting a drink outside, and going back to its seats again.

At the Française, even to the gallery, all seats have a wide vestibule behind them where one can stroll between whiles and talk. It is here that the "ouvreuses" (theatre attendants), also an institution, congregate.

The "ouvreuse" in France shares with the "concierge" the general dislike of the French public and is almost as classic a subject of jest and scoffing as was the mother-in-law of our own mid-Victorian times. It is perhaps typical of French ways that the "ouvreuse" is always ancient and aggressively unattractive. She is also popularly always dislikable and grasping in the extreme; most of them are I believe ex-theatricals from dressers to actresses and their pay is low. Paris refers to them as "ces harpies." Shilling-shocker fiction provides them always with a disreputable past. It is the sort of gallows ending to a bad female life. "A la fin de sa vie, elle devint ouvreuse au théâtre."

After I had realised this mass portrait of the "ouvreuse" I studied her with more care, but my glimpses were brief, and I can only regretfully state that anyhow she really seems to have supplied a good deal of the foundation for her own portrait.

There is more art, far more technique, and much better craftsmanship in the French theatre. It holds a bigger place in French literature and in French life. It is given more serious attention among critics and the public. It has a greater influence. It is felt really to matter. And yet with all this by a strange contradiction French actors and actresses, government servants though they may be, are still to a great extent the "vagabonds

and outcasts " our old laws made them. It was with difficulty that Molière, dramatist as well as actor, favourite and friend of king and court, was even buried in consecrated ground, or had a funeral service read over him. And this feeling lingers. In popular estimation an actress is always a woman " no better than she should be." No lordlings marry chorus girls, no " bourgeois " or professional man takes a wife from the stage, nor is it even thought that respectable " ménages " exist among the actors and actresses themselves. So between stage and public a great social gulf is fixed. Dramatic art seems held in higher estimation in France, yet at the expense of the artist.

Once on a Sunday we went to Longchamp to see the races. The Grand Prix is run on a Sunday as a matter of course and " tout Paris," really samples of all Paris, goes.

The racecourse is laid out on the flat meadows which border the river behind the Bois de Boulogne, and a special pier is opened for the river steamboats that day. Being outside Paris two Customs (Octroi) officials greet one on arrival, demanding payment on certain comestibles—meat, for example. And the classic jest is to retort with, " Si, monsieur, j'ai de la viande . . . dans mes sandwiches."

One may jest with the Customs in France, never in Germany, though as a class I have not found them penetrated with humour.

It was a beautifully fine day, the day we went to Longchamp, and the course was full of people, though there seemed space and to spare for all. I even succeeded in getting a good place in the front row nearly opposite the Grand Stand and the finishing-post. It needed patience, of course, the waiting through several races before " the " race, but not too much.

Pari Mutuel boxes grew thick on our part of the

ground, but betting was not greatly in evidence, however much it was really indulged in. Before each race the horses running paraded down the straight so that one could, if one wished, pick a winner from actual seeing. I really did.

When the Grand Prix came off and all the horses came prancing past us, I staked my judgment, and also one book to the maximum value of 10*d.* which Richard and I agreed to bet one another, on a dear brown creature who took my fancy. I noticed at the time without thinking about it that the man immediately behind me left his place, and went straight off to the betting booths, but then the race began, and I forgot everything else. We were near enough to get the wind of the rush as the horses went by, and to feel the thudding stamp of their hoofs on the ground and so to realise, if faintly, the ghastly horror which is a cavalry charge. . . . And also to feel that maddening, breathless wait, the excitement of that pause when one strains and strains, and does nothing and chance decides, which makes, I suppose, the intoxication of gambling.

Essentially then the desire of the drunkard, the gambler, the lover, and the mystic is the same—to get out of himself, to be swept on, and taken up into a force which is all and where he is nothing. The desire in other words for the Eastern Nirvana. And what a strange light it throws upon man that his strongest, sometimes his fiercest desires should be just to be rid of himself. Are we then but ourselves against the grain that we so chafe and stretch to be not ourselves? And on the lower plane so selfishly indulge ourselves in getting rid of self? Is the real burden of life to each self just the bearing of itself, a burden we can never honourably escape till Death loose the bonds? . . .

When the horses came for the last time thundering down the straight, my dear brown creature was ahead

and he passed the winning-post first by a length. I chose my book on the spot, the *Chanson de Roland* which I had long wanted to possess.

As we turned away to leave the rail, tired now of standing and anxious for a rest on the grass, some one tapped me on the shoulder and a voice offered "Madame" its owner's "best thanks." I turned in surprise. It was the man who had gone so hurriedly from behind me towards the betting booths directly after I had "picked the winner." With I suppose a gambler's superstition, he had betted heavily on the greenhorn's choice, and won. He was beginning to suggest as their real begetter I should take some of the gains, when I broke in hurriedly and quite instinctively with a "No" which cut the whole thing short. Yet the reason behind that instinctive "No" which remains always "No" I do not yet quite clearly see.

We sat on the grass and watched, from a distance now, the elegant and also the extravagant costumes gathered in the enclosure and on the Grand Stand. There seemed far more that was extravagant than was really elegant, and yet even over the most bizarre there was that wondrous French touch which makes for art. It was the problem of my two "mondaines" over again.

But the parties of the "bourgeoisie," of the "très petite bourgeoisie" on the grass were really much more interesting. At these kind of gatherings some one seems always to be eating, the late lunchers overtaking the early teaers. So we watched the greatest variety of meals, in which pâtés and the brown jelly of the cold, cooked meats of the "charcuteries" played the most prominent part, and of course long yards of bread.

Our own lunch had followed an appetising menu which I find set down in my account book, where always the menu faces the entry of the raw materials, as

DÉJEUNER AU GRAND AIR

Hors d'Œuvres

Sandwiches aux œufs

Rôti

Sandwiches au bœuf avec tomates

Fromage

Sandwiches au Coulommiers

Dessert

Sandwiches à l'abricot (compote)

On summer Sundays, on fine spring and autumn ones, we often took our "Déjeuner au grand air" in this manner, and they remain some of the best and dearest of our "Dimanches et Fêtes."

We would go by tram or steamboat, later on when bicycles came into our possession we rode, outside the city to the little semi-country spots carefully sown with restaurants where the Frenchman loves to picnic. Some of the most amusing of these restaurants, and much frequented by the students, are the tree ones of Sceaux Robinson.

In the grounds of a café here an enterprising proprietor once put a platform up among the big branches of an old tree, a ladder staircase to reach that platform, and a table and chairs upon it. Then he invited his "clientèle" to mount and dine "à la Robinson Crusoe" (Swiss Family).

They mounted and dined, and the thing caught on. Other restaurant keepers did the same, and when the suburban railway from the Boul' Miche was built it made a station here, which was called Sceaux-Robinson after the tree restaurants and the Swiss Family, and to distinguish it from the village and station of Sceaux proper a mile away.

Robinson is quite a feature among the restaurants of the "Paris campagne" and in some ways deserves it,

We did not find, however, that the restaurant diners ever strayed far from their restaurants. And the idea of walking the few miles between Sceaux and Clamart, for instance, another frequented resort and a tram terminus, occurred to no one but ourselves.

It was quite a pretty walk, with a road running between fields, blue-green cornfields with the scarlet of poppies showing between the stalks, and a line of wood on the horizon. No hedges of course, but a strip of grass on the field's edge like a steep step above the dusty road. On it we once met a young man with a bicycle. He was busy with a map, and he looked up as we passed to ask where the road led.

We didn't know exactly ourselves, this being our first time of walking it, and it being one of those roads always on the borders, but never really in a map, at least that was its fate on all the large section maps of the " Campagne de Paris " in our guide book; but still we had a conviction that it led to Plessis-Piquet which was in a map and on our road to Clamart.

The young man also wanted to get to Plessis-Piquet on his way somewhere else, at least he had a comfortable idea that Plessis-Piquet did as well as anywhere. And we were not much farther on the way before he overtook us on his bicycle and called out we went almost as fast as he did.

I laughed and pointed to the hill which rose up steep in front.

He groaned and " franchement declined the combat." So we all walked amiably up together.

And he talked. He told us all about himself with great frankness. How he was twenty-five and a student, medicine. How he came from the provinces and was enjoying himself greatly in Paris. How he was going to the Bal Bullier that evening. How he didn't want to pass his examinations too soon, because directly he was

through he would have to go back "là-bas" and "se marier," but that he must pass before he was twenty-seven or he would have to do his soldiering. And the prospect of returning "là-bas" to "immédiatement se marier" did not appeal to him at all.

"Ça peut être qu'elle sera gentille," he said, "it is to be hoped. Mais se ranger. Oh, la la." And his nice brown eyes (he had nice brown eyes and an open upright sort of nature too) grew quite sad.

"No more Bal Bulliers," I suggested.

He looked round and smiled. A suspicion, not a new one, I had suffered from it before, of what he was thinking grew into instant conviction. I determined to slay it at once.

"You know we are married," I said, "and we like it. It's great fun."

The young man for all his French readiness was quite taken aback. I thought I heard a "Pas possible" hastily swallowed.

"Ah," he retorted at last, "les Anglais, ils ont de bonnes idées, mais ce n'est pas la même chose chez nous. Je vous assure."

He was still more surprised when he heard we also were students, Licence ès lettres.

"Was it usual in our country?"

Well, no, we couldn't truthfully say it was usual, but still . . . here we were, students and married, and . . .

"Bien amusés," as he added for himself.

Then we all laughed. And getting more confidential he inquired, "Would we really tell him what we were doing on this country road, on foot, in the middle of nowhere?"

So we told him we were walking from Sceaux where one tram had left us to Clamart where we should get another to Paris.

"Walking!" echoed the young man amazed.

"Simply walking."

"Ah, ces Anglais!"

It astonished him almost more than the two other facts.

"Married, Sorbonne students, and walking along country roads! 'Comble d'impossibilités.' Well, if he did such a thing, which he never should 'bien sûrement,' he would keep stopping on the way for drinks."

So his frankness and his surprise having dissolved all the sticky stiffness of conventionality, I suggested that was why he took so long to pass his exams. "Too many stops for drinks on the way."

"And Bal Bulliers," he added and laughed, with such a delightful look of honest wickedness in his eyes that I forgave him his Bal Bullier on the spot. I even forgave him the three-inch fringe of growing beard upon his chin.

Then we fell to talking about the University and its professors. And by the time we were at the top of the hill and he was mounting to ride one way and we were ready to walk the other, we felt quite sorry to part. He kept us still with just a last word, and another last word, for quite a long while, and finally rode off with a quite touchingly sincere desire to see us again.

I hope the unknown wife "là-bas" in the provinces was "très gentille," and that he found it possible to "bien s'amuser" even though married. We never did see him again. But he made me understand and with a softened understanding the whole question of French morality and its Bal Bulliers. He was honest and upright and frank and kindly, and one felt he would do his duty up to the hilt of his conviction by that unknown wife he so hoped would be "gentille," when he returned to marry her "là-bas."

We went on to Clamart, saying very little but feeling the bountifulness of our wealth with every step we took. Then we waited standing after our walk for four trams

to arrive and fill and depart, that we might ride back outside and so save threepence.

Clamart itself, instead of being the end, was often the beginning of an excursion, for it had a tramway which went down the rue de Rennes; and from it we would walk out of the ugly straggling village into the woods of Meudon.

Meudon is quite the prettiest little "promenade" near Paris. It lies on the line of hills, mostly wooded hills, that encircle the Seine on its left bank from just outside the fortifications to beyond Suresnes. Bas-Meudon below on the river is at the foot of the hills which are here so steep that a little "funiculaire" railway runs up them.

Meudon was the home of Louis XIV.'s son, the Dauphin, whose whole existence was smothered by that of his royal and sunlike father. Something of the château and its gardens remains shut in by high walls and put to governmental uses; but the Terrace which hangs on the top of the hillside, carried along on great walls, with its far-reaching view over the river and the country round Paris, the charming stretch of its woods, these are the attraction of Meudon.

These woods of Paris, Meudon, Clamart, St. Cloud, Versailles, Boulogne, with a great deal even of Fontainebleau itself, are disappointing at first, for they seem more like our hazel copses than woods. The trees, almost entirely in the Bois de Boulogne, and greatly in the other woods, are holm oaks which never grow to any size or thickness. But after a while the very delicacy and littleness of their branches with its effect of youth and greenness give an added charm, and one somehow appropriate to Paris. Here with all the quaintness and greenness of a wood comes too the sunshine and the colour of the green, and the feel and freshness of the sky above. No suspicion of gloom, a gay bright airiness rather set in its

own frame of solitude and peace. We grew to love these woods with their glimpses from above of the river below, and their glimpses from below of the sky above, their little paths and long straight allées, their sophisticated ponds. Their sense of a city's nearness, and yet their country quiet. And we would often go from Meudon to St. Cloud or towards Versailles, or from Sèvres to either.

Sometimes we would choose the river path itself and walk along towards Suresnes where we could cross to the Bois by the bridge and so home from the Étoile, or come back by steamer from Suresnes itself. It was here along the river path below St. Cloud that I saw my first kingfisher, and I have never forgotten it. The flash of brilliant blue against the dark green bank above the slate-black of the water, and the sudden sense of joy that filled the world.

Like all Parisiens we went sometimes to the Bois. We made the "Tour du Lac," we saw the "mondaines" in their carriages. We also saw the "Cascade," and the Restaurant which is the Mecca of wedding parties of the "petite bourgeoisie." Brides in veils could be seen carefully picking their way on the points of white shoes to the waterfall. Bridegrooms in evening dress and top hats beside them. Parents behind.

There can be peace and quiet too in the Bois, but there was too much of the public park and fashionable promenade for us to love it.

Once in the winter when the lake was frozen we went on a clear blue day to see the hoar-frost on the trees and the water-fowl looking so dark and ungainly crouched on the ice by the island. The Bois that day was transformed.

Too hard a frost for horses, not enough for skaters, the classic luncheon hour, so the fashionable "Tour du Lac" were deserted; the little wandering paths that lead beneath the small shrub-like holm oaks, solitary;

and everything white and glistening. The planted groups of tall fir trees by the lake were the Christmas trees of one's youthful expectations and the season's cards. They glittered and sparkled, white on dark green, against a blue, blue sky; and on the thin white ice the water-fowl, fluffed and dark, clustered.

The holm oaks, their straight springing branches like sticks set at angles into a knob of trunk, were encased in a thin crisp covering of frosted vapour which creaked and cracked without apparent cause or movement. There was no wind. The lumpy earth of the path, iron to the feet, had each blade of its coarse grass edged with a soft white powder. In the air there was that curious strained stillness which a sudden frost brings. It is my most salient memory of the Bois.

Versailles of course we went to in proper tourist form, both at the beginning and at the end of our student time. And when with newly acquired knowledge of the Grand Siècle I saw its bald and imposing front again, I felt all through me how fitly it symbolised its Louis. And then the sudden reverse from the glitter and gold of its state apartments to the little, dark, atticy rooms where court and king really lived.

Versailles is a sort of bad dose which we should all take for the better understanding of France and the purging of our minds of prejudice on both sides. I dislike Louis and most of his works (while fully realising he was worthy of dislike) and yet there is a spaciousness of grasp about Versailles that embodies much of France and of its century. A sense of a great nation living greatly. A sense of effortless power and also of "L'Etat c'est moi." Tyranny efficient and beautiful and neither restless nor afraid. It remained so up to the steps of the scaffold.

It is the immense size of Versailles, palace and park,

which the weary tourist takes away as his deepest impression, and very few in consequence ever get beyond the immediate gravel walks of the garden. To do that one has resolutely to do nothing else, and to get quite tired walking before one can get down their enormous length and out of eyeshot of the palace. And yet it is worth it, if only for the realisation of the immensity of the work needed to make it, the most ungrateful site ever converted to a palace and a park, especially a park where ornamental water, in correctly fashioned basins and artificial grottos and fountains, plays so great a part. And every drop of this water had to be brought miles and miles. When the fountains play they spurt gold, as well as water, and every yard of the gravel paths, the green "plates-bandes," and coloured "parterres" is covered with it. Voltaire spoke of Versailles as the "abîme des dépenses." Money and labour were shot down here like dust (one cannot say water). In building his palace Louis laid the economic foundations of his descendant's guillotine.

You can, from the old Palace of St. Germain-en-Laye where, before Louis, the court lived, see across the bend of the river, see faintly on the horizon the tower of St. Denis, the royal burying place. So Louis moved his palace that not even by a glimpse of a tower should he be reminded that he was, like other men, mortal.

Down the Boul' Miche past the very railings of the Luxembourg, with its starting place in fact in the place de l'Odéon, runs a steam tramway, which is in other words a young trainlet of a short and stunted appearance. The engine is squat and black and very smoky, and the carriages are the carriages of the French railways, only smaller and differently hitched together, with an outside railed-in platform where one can get all the smuts and some of the view.

I had been so many times nearly run over by this trainlet as I dodged the traffic across the Boul' Miche from the Luxembourg Gardens, that one day I suggested we should really get into it and see other people do the dodging; and also discover where this little trainlet which had so obviously broken loose from its proper place in stations, on embankments, and between railway lines to career down streets and roadways was really going.

A board across the fat breast of the engine said respectively "Arpajon" or "Odéon" according to the turn of its head. While the tops of the carriages were more explicit. They said "Porte d'Orléans, Bourg-la-Reine, Longjumeau, Montlhéry." And sometimes there was a squeezed-in bit with Pont d'Anthony in faded letters. I did not much favour Anthony, he seemed undecided in his mind, but Longjumeau (Long Twins), Montlhéry, and Arpajon were more fascinating. And then the fun of setting off Francewards on a young trainlet loose among the streets and roads of Paris, and the fields and "routes" of "dehors."

To go to Arpajon cost 1 fr. 25 c., to go to Montlhéry a little less. Montlhéry won, on account of its price, its name (fancy having *nllh* in the nice middle of a French word), and also and greatly because of what there was to see there.

Under the entirely abstracted tuition of Monsieur Buchaire, and the very vividly sympathetic and interested tuition of Monsieur Petit de Julleville I was acquiring some idea of France in the early thousands, and Montlhéry came into it.

So one fête day when all the sky was blue and all the cornfields gold we climbed into the hard and much-used wooden carriages of our trainlet at the place de l'Odéon itself, and watched the squat little engine sending forth its perennial panache of black smuts. Then we started recklessly Francewards down the boulevard.

The first part of the way we knew. Observatoire, rue Montrouge, place Denfert, porte d'Orléans. After that, though Bourg-la-Reine grew a professor we knew, the way to it was fresh, and after Bourg it was all new France to us, and quickly new country. Real country, not the "campagne de Paris," which is suburban in its countryhood, but country where the yellow cornfields grew high and golden on either side the carriage, and the old women, sunburnt, were knitting as they grazed their cows.

We went mostly, of course, along the roads at the side of the broad Route Nationale which goes from Paris to Orléans, and so south. But often our trainlet, in the exuberance of its spirits, would take a short cut at full speed through fields to rejoin the road farther on. Then the smuts would fly in long black streamers from its funnel, and out on the platform under the deep blue of the summer sky we put up umbrellas to keep them off. And I was wearing that day (reckless extravagance, it cost 1 fr. 50 to wash, not that I did have it washed more than once when I discovered the price) a pink cotton frock. It had frills which suited me, and a fichu, and a blue silk waistband, and many memories. And this day being a very special day in our calendar and a hot one in everybody's, I had taken out the pink cotton dress, and greatly daring, worn it. And here was the young trainlet, like a naughty boy, trying to cover me with smudges.

Frenchwomen always with large baskets got in and out at stopping places in the bare middle of the road. While all the inhabitants of Wissous, of the Long Twins, and of Monthléry itself were in the street to welcome the trainlet. Its arrival seemed an epoch and an excitement.

Extremely pleased with itself, it would sit black and panting in the very middle of the inevitable "place de la République," while the town's inhabitants wandered round it, patting its smutty sides, and looking into the carriage windows. Then the gentleman in a jaunty blue

blouse hidden in its interior would lean out and converse with all and sundry, and the other gentleman in a peaked cap who sold and punctured strips of white paper, and did mysterious things with an iron wand, would descend into the square and transact quantities of business (he told us he was "très affairé ce matin") by doing nothing, and letting other people remove or deposit parcels. Sometimes we heard "Bien," sometimes he shrugged his shoulders while an agitated lady clasping an openwork basket of quacking ducks in her arms, or a man lost beneath a "panier" of vegetables, inquired where they should go. The children gathered in bunches in front of the engine and all the dogs, their tongues out, sat between the railway lines beyond us.

There was something very friendly and very fascinating in travelling in this way down the roads and through the towns and villages of France, and we were quite sorry when the crowd, the children, and the dogs of Montlhéry appeared round the trainlet ready to watch us get out. So sorry that, in sympathy, we too joined them to watch the openwork baskets of quacking ducks or clucking fowls go in and out of the trainlet, the big "paniers" of vegetables, so neatly packed, arrive on the backs of the blue-bloused men. To watch the guard who stood "très affairé" with his hands in his pockets beside the van, and the driver who was leaning over the squat little engine exchanging repartee with a lady friend.

At last the busy guard brought his affairs to an end and climbed lazily into his van, the driver turned a lever and sank from view. The children and the dogs melted from in front of the engine, and with a new streamer of long black smuts the young trainlet disappeared down the streets of Montlhéry.

When we turned round again they lay empty and hot in the sunshine, and a sleepy silence had fallen thick over the pavés and the trottoirs.

We did not need to ask our way to the castle. It stood up there before us, and our lunch in its basket was in our hands, so gently we climbed up the streets past the church and so to the massive ruins.

The Sieur de Montlhéry on his hill, so just above the great road which goes from Paris, Francewards, to Orléans and the south, commanded all the traffic of his time. He held the way. Merchant, king, or commoner went by at his pleasure, and he took toll of all. Frankly and proudly a robber chief, he had no more shame of his method of living off others, thought no more wrong of it as a method than the profit-seeking business man to-day. He had the might and the opportunity just as any other cornerer of a commodity, and he took it. When the government, which was the king, wanted provisions or troops, Montlhéry, who held the road by which they must pass, demanded his commission and, like any powerful interest, got it. After a while though, probably because he still stuck to his old methods when these were outworn, and had grown too rapacious in his ways, he was recognised as a nuisance, then as an unnecessary nuisance, and then as a removable nuisance, and so was finally removed. But there his stronghold still stands, high up and just above the white road which goes down past Orléans, Francewards.

The round keep of his castle on its mound of grass-grown earth was hot in the sun, but one little dark of shadow lay across it, and here against the old walls we sat and lunched. And beyond the shadow patch the little green lizards darted or soaked in the sunshine. It was the first time I had seen lizards and their queer snaky relationship fascinated me, an unwilling fascination then, except for the joy that arose in me at the knowledge of having really got far enough south to see lizards at all; and that was a joy indeed.

So we sat eating our "déjeuner" in the small and

shallow shadow patch beneath the keep of Montlhéry, while on the stony slope the lizards lay or ran. And the sky was blue above, and the world was beautiful below, and France lay shimmering in the distance, all France. And perhaps it was then for the first time that the charm, the quite explicit, penetrating charm of France slid into my soul.

“Adieu, charmant pays de France.”

Long ago I had learnt it out of a purple-covered poetry reader, as a detested French lesson, but it came back then, it comes back always.

“Charmant pays de France. . . .”

A land to live for, and a land to die for, a land to know and love.

And I think that day looking south and Francewards we determined to learn it, little by little, bit by bit, as best we could till from east to west, from north to south, France in our minds was a whole, not a town and a railway journey, and possibly a seaside resort, with a cathedral sticking out somewhere in the midst.

It was then too that there somehow came to me the realisation of how much of France is beyond Paris, and comparatively how little this side of it; and with the lizards that France is southern, largely of the south, and is influenced by its southness. When my eyes were once opened to this fact I saw many things more truly, I saw many things I had not seen before at all, and I think I began to understand.

So hot and still it was beneath the keep of Montlhéry, so blue the sky above, while below the white road went crawling south; went crawling south through Orléans to the Loire; through Tours and Poitiers and Angoulême to Bordeaux; through the Landes to Bayonne and to Spain; and through Orléans to Tours, to Limoges, and Brive and Toulouse, and so to the mountains and to

Spain; and yet again through Orléans and Bourges and Clermont-Ferrand down the long valley of the Allier to Nîmes, Marseilles, and the sea. Montlhéry held it all, had seen it all. Coming up and up out of France into Paris; going down and down out of Paris into France.

"Adieu, charmant pays de France. . . .
. . . te quitter c'est mourir."

The make of Paris is very much conditioned by its fortifications. These walls on their grass glacis, grass without but bricked within, run all round the city; iron gates allowing entrance and exit at intervals. Inside the walls runs a wide boulevard planted with trees, with on the walls' under-sides a little space of waste ground, mostly mud, where children play and growing louts gamble. Outside the walls and beneath the steep bank comes a dry ditch forty feet wide and then, for a given space all round the city, no houses or buildings are allowed. In consequence immediately outside the city there runs, almost in all directions, a wide space of market gardens. For the thrifty French grower saw his opportunity and took it. Intensive culture is here the rule, and the little squares and oblongs of unhedged crops with their rows of lettuces under glass "cloches" make one of the distinctive features of the "without." Every here and there a little wooden shed shelters tools and the watchman. The watchman is very necessary or the crop would disappear; the immediate neighbourhood of the fortifications inside and out has a bad reputation, and the "Rôdeurs de Barrière," who wander seeking what they may devour, are well known to the police.

A ride right round the fortifications, which we took on bicycles, gives one an idea of the size of the city, but is depressing. The high walls seem to shut out the sun, and mean streets to fringe the town. Dilapidated drinking shops clustering along its edge add another note to

the dreariness, and one is forced to think of Zola's *L'Assommoir*.

And as one goes on, mile after mile of wall and boulevard, of dilapidated drinking shops and the endings of mean streets, mile after mile of poverty playing in the mud or sitting weary on the public seats, it all seems one: east and west, north and south, hill and valley have no character, save a general one of pallid depression. The actual gates of the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes bring a momentary change, the river as it flows in and out of Paris another, but even the fashionable houses of the Etoile quarter shun the actual walls and throw out a line of poverty towards them.

Paris grows of course beyond its walls daily, but owing to them its growth is not continuous—rather the villages that were outside extend themselves, suburbanise themselves, but they rest, nevertheless, the “campagne de Paris.”

Cycling in Paris is full of flavour, rather too much so, and I never learnt to like it. The traffic is fast and apparently all over the place, and the “pavés” are atrocious. We learnt to find the nearest, easiest, and smoothest way out, or if not quite outside at least to the boulevard under the walls and so out. If it was longer in mileage it was shorter in wear and tear to tyres and temper, and once outside Paris there were many charms.

Steam tramways, too, take bicycles though ordinary ones do not, and both trains and trams take them just as pounds weight of luggage, and you pay a penny registration. This to the hard-up gives great scope for rides, and lets one go much farther afield.

The north side of Paris, Argenteuil, Enghien, L'Isle Adam, Chantilly, Dammartin, almost the half-circle between the Seine and Marne we did not know, or knew

little, but the other half-circle from Seine to Seine again we knew well.

St. Denis we went to, riding it from Neuilly along the river, not such a pretty river as the Meudon, St. Cloud, Suresnes part, a flatter, rather desolate river with factory chimneys standing up straight and tall, solitary or in clusters, against the sky. A river too with comparatively little craft upon it, too far down for the Paris steamers, which mostly stop at Suresnes, and too high up for the bulk of the barges, which go straight from St. Denis by the canal to the Bassin de la Villette, leaving to the river only those with business at the quays of the Seine itself.

But all along the river here sit fishermen angling steadily, ceaselessly, unsuccessfully for the fish which to the looker-on seem never to rise. It has pleased us to consider the French generally as a capricious, impetuous, and a flighty folk, but the solid enduring patience of the Seine fishermen who will sit anywhere apparently along its banks in Paris or out, hour after hour watching a red bob on the water, cheerfully believing in bites, is patience and perseverance in mountainous chunks. They are not scarce either. In places they almost line the banks, sitting on the sloping stone sides of the quays beyond the sharp prow of the city island; standing on the river path below the wooded hills of Meudon and St. Cloud, among the meadows of Longchamp, and in the grass of the flat dull bank towards St. Denis, equally absorbed in fishing, equally unsuccessful and expectant.

Sometimes one came across a black punt moored with two or three fishermen in a row, mostly middle-aged and rotund, with straw hats, or in their shirt sleeves, the "bon bourgeois" retired, perfectly placid and happy, and indestructibly patient.

We saw numbers of them as we rode to St. Denis though it was a cold day in autumn with misty distances and grey colouring. We lunched on the river's edge

opposite one punt full. And all the time we ate there was never so much as a stir on the lines of the three of them. But they sat still and cheerful while we got colder and colder; and jumped on our bicycles at last to ride with relief into St. Denis and demand hot coffee at the very first café.

Now there are two versions of the legend of St. Denis. One says he was slain by the sword on the hill of Montmartre and thereupon he arose, picked up his head, tucked it under his arm, and so walked across country four miles or so ("In these circumstances," as a Frenchman put it, "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*"), where he stopped, and a church was subsequently built upon the spot. But the more usual version puts the place of his execution within the walls of the old city of Paris itself, and makes St. Denis walk with his head under his arm a matter of two miles only to the hill of Montmartre where he lay down and—one cannot exactly say died, being dead already or where is the miracle?—but succumbed. And is not the twisting and the turning of the streets by which he walked a proof of the story?

From Montmartre where he lay down, St. Denis' remains were taken to St. Denis, and thus arose his church.

Now St. Denis in mediaeval art is always assumed to be also St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the living convert of St. Paul in person, though Denis was undoubtedly Bishop of Paris in the third century; and his legend and that of Dionysius recount each other's miracles with perfect impartiality. Lastly the modern myth digger declares that St. Denis with his death and his arising is nothing but the story of Dionysus, and his fête but that of the feast of the wine growers of Paris.

In any case, after the building of his church at St. Denis under Dagobert I., he became the patron saint of France and the French kings; and so with the French dynasty

of the Capets his church was their burial place and his oriflamme the sacred banner of France, that is of the French kings when they took the field in person. St. Louis took it out of this very church when he went to the Crusades, and Charles VI. took it to Agincourt. It was never taken down again, and the royal warcry, "Montjoye St. Denis," died out.

In this church Jeanne d'Arc hung up her armour as a votive offering after the relief of the siege of Orléans. In this church all the kings of France, from Dagobert to Louis XV., were buried, but the "main puissante de la République" took all their poor bones out again, and threw them pell-mell into a common grave, from which Louis XVIII. rescued them as well as he could, and, adding to them the poor bodies of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI., buried them again in the crypt. But he could not put back the metal monuments which had been melted down nor restore the stone ones which had been chipped and hacked and ill-treated, despite the care of Lenoir when he sheltered them in the "musée des petits Augustins."

And the state official will tell you all this at full speed while he rushes you round, unconcerned.

If you ask him what he thinks either of the kings or the Republicans, he shrugs his shoulders, feeling it all dead matter, finished long ago, remote, done with, of no concern to living France, as much an historical phenomenon as the Boston tea riots which stirs no British breast to the least excitement, and with which he anyway has absolutely nothing now to do. The "fureurs" of the Republicans are as the "fureurs" of King Herod to him, probably even still less his concern, for King Herod belongs to the Church and clericalism and anti-clericalism are vital things in France to-day.

There is nothing beautiful in St. Denis except its church. The town has a squalid bare look. That look

so frequently translated in guide-book phraseology as "prosperous and industrial," because a large amount of money is made by some one out of the work of the town.

There are factories in St. Denis. There are pale children and ugly streets. There are chilly depressing cafés with dying trees in green tubs on the pavement in front, where yellow iron tables stand rickety and paintless on three legs. Things depressing with that peculiar penetrating depression which belongs to festivities that are not festive.

And St. Denis suffers from that half life which settles down on places near great towns, sucking their character away. It suffers from its six miles' distance from Paris. And it suffers still more from itself. An industrial town where "nobody" lives; which means a town made up of that squalid underside of modern wealth till it stares one, a whole town of it not a "poor part," in the face.

In guide-book phraseology again, "The attractions of the town are comprised in its cathedral."

Poor town! Poor Suger who ruled its monastery, its church, its king, his kingdom, whom St. Bernard loved "d'un amour éternel," who pleaded that none should "livrer la brebis au loup," and spent himself to cure the sick and the needy.

From St. Denis the river, which has taken all the way from Sèvres an immense bend northwards, takes another southwards, coming back almost to Versailles. It then doubles north again in a third bend, coming half-way back to St. Denis again, which makes with the lesser bend between Bas-Meudon and the Louvre four great sweeps of river and three peninsulas of land in the immediate vicinity of Paris.

It is just above the elbow of the last southern bend and still among the wooded hills which stretch from Meudon westwards, northwards, that the kings of France

built the Palace of St. Germain-en-Laye. First a castle to guard the river and the river road to Paris, then a summer residence to escape from Paris, and now an ancient monument and an historical museum.

Yet St. Germain has to-day what Versailles never had, grace and life; dignity too, and charm, the charm of the French Renaissance that is always more charming than beautiful. At St. Germain it is seen in some ways at its best. The setting of forest and river, the sense of the city's nearness, the lingering something of dispossessed royalty that clings to it still. Did not the king and queen of England reside here through long years, kinged by France until the Stuarts petered out in Old and Young Pretenders?

And then the fresh cleanness of the air, the gay cleanness of the streets and houses, the brilliant cleanness of sunshine falling on red walls and court-yards, and that remaining sense of careless brightness which seems the underlying character of the French Renaissance; *debonair* was the word much on the lips of the time, and it still seems the word to describe it. It is that first instinctive gayness which comes with sunshine after gloom. And the French Renaissance felt it and expressed it with the added character of its race when it stepped from the thick-walled, loopholed castles of its fathers with their dungeons and their keeps into the sunny, windowed living-rooms of its *châteaux*. All through the art and literature of the time this note of gaiety, careless and "*débonnaire*," comes up, comes as with the sense of relief that the stone of some oppression had been rolled away.

St. Germain has a famous terrace, a forest of much beauty, and a museum which shows in a series of delightful models exactly how Caesar fought in Gaul, also how the Gauls fought Caesar, making of that supremely dull classic a living series of despatches from the front.

St. Germain, too, owns a colony of English people and has owned it since James II. and his court fled from London to Paris, and under the aegis of Louis XIV. settled down here to an undistinguished exile. It was an event of immense importance at the court of Versailles when Royal Louis intimated that he was about to acknowledge James' son, on James' death, as King of England, though neither king nor courtiers could apparently help at times referring to the usurper in England as the "roi d'Angleterre."

We rode back from St. Germain by Marly, which was at one time a kind of week-end annexe to Versailles. Courtiers prided themselves on being "de tous les Marlies." Very little remains of the château now, but the little wood is pleasant. The President shoots in the park. North of it is St. Germain, south of it Versailles. One can skirt Versailles at Rocquencourt and go through Vaucresson to St. Cloud, keeping mostly on the heights and in the woods, and among the parks and by the palaces of the kings and the two emperors of France.

All this is royal ground, the regal suburb of Paris, and it is all dead and done with. Much of it destroyed, the rest mummied into museums and "monuments historiques," but all dead, and dead, and dead. Yet still as the government legend runs, it stands

"A la Gloire de la France."

To the west of Fontainebleau and about the same distance out of Paris going south, in the middle of the immense wheat-growing plain of La Beauce, there stands out a hill. A little hill, neither high nor large, which can yet be seen for many miles. The river here, running as a big brook runs round the foot of the hill on one side, has so hollowed its way below the surface of the plain

that it has traced a little valley round the hill, adding to its height.

Up the hill thickly, and on that side of it which rises straight from the plain though thinly, stand the old houses of a considerable town. They rise in steep tiers, with odd corners of gardens overhanging the water, with narrow cobbled streets which turn unexpectedly into stone stairways zigzagging between them. A rounded tower, timbered and carved, will stand up suddenly, its century-old beams making black lines on the white-plastered walls, its little windows diamonded in their leaden lattice work.

In the brook below the washerwomen in parapeted "lavoirs" beat blue blouses on the stones, using sometimes flat wooden bats like those for butter-making.

The little river has a fringe of trees and a green edge of grass on its roadside. And flowering bushes or the bright patch of blooming flowers in garden beds or flower pots catch the eye among the grey of the old houses.

Above all on the top of the hill, its crown and glory, a landmark in the plain for many miles, dominating it, is the cathedral.

"Qui a jamais vu, en effet, qui a jamais entendu," says the old chronicle. . . . "Who has ever seen, who has ever heard in ancient times that princes mighty in this world, that men great in honours and riches, men of noble birth, men and women proud and haughty, should bend their necks beneath the yoke of heavy carts, and just like beasts of burden should drag to the very house of Christ carts loaded with cheese, with oil, with stones, with wood, and with all that is necessary either for the needs of man or for the building of the church? And while they are dragging these carts there comes a thing wonderful to see. It is that very often when a thousand people or more are harnessed to the carts (so great is the difficulty of dragging them) that they walk in such a

silence that no whisper even can be heard, and truly if one did not see with one's own eyes one would believe that, even with so great a multitude of people, there was no one there at all.

"And when they stop on the way, nothing is heard but the sound of people confessing their sins, and the sound of prayer penitent and pure to God, for the forgiveness of these sins. At the word of the priests who exhort all hearts to charity, hate is forgotten and enmity cast out, debts are forgiven and peace and the unity of all hearts established. And if by chance any are so given over to evil that they will not forgive their enemies, or refuse to obey the counsel of the priests piously given them, instantly their offering is thrown from the cart as impure and they are cast out with ignominy and with shame from this society of saints. Here one sees the priests who lead each cart exhorting to penitence, to the confession of sins, to the resolution to lead a better life. Here one sees old men, young men, children imploring the Lord, while from the depths of their souls break sobs and sighs, with words of praise and prayer.

"Directly these people, warned by the sound of trumpets and the sight of banners, set out on the way again, the whole procession goes with so much ease that no obstacle can stop it. When they come at last to the church, the carts are placed all round it, like a holy camp, and all night they watch, singing hymns and chanting psalms. On each cart, where candles are lighted, the infirm and the sick are placed, and the precious relics of the saints are brought to solace them. Then, when at last the priests and the acolytes end the ceremony, the people, following with devout hearts, implore the mercy of the Lord and of His Very Happy Mother."

And the impress of that devotion, that belief, that exaltation, that outpouring of self, that superb and divine inspiration of a crowd acting in sacrifice and

unison, to which France has always been apt, is built into the very walls of the cathedral, into its stained glass and its statues, into its pillars and its pavement, into its arches, its carvings, its capitals, into its whole self. Before its grandeur one is dumb.

The mighty Middle Ages with all their force and faith are embodied here.

Sometimes on Sundays we stayed at home and had people to tea. Then cubbyhouse looked its smartest, and it was surprising how many quite unexpected people fell in love with it, or said they did. But I think it really had a charm which they felt, anyway for the time being.

We had the Americans once to tea. Mrs. Boston had recently had a baby, and Mr. Boston had just come in for a good deal of money. And the baby and the money coming together they "were just using a room or so in the empty flat opposite until it was let."

Mrs. Boston had had her baby ill. She told me all about it. Something was wrong with the child's brain she was sure. It couldn't hold its head up properly. So she had had an expensive American doctor who attended all the Vanderbilts and Rockefellers when in Paris. He had come, and seen, and gone away again, not saying much except that he would look in again. And she got more and more anxious. Something was wrong she was sure. So she called in another American doctor

equally expensive and he had done much the same. No one would tell her what was the matter, and she got more and more alarmed. She thought it was "brain anaemia."

Then somebody recommended wine baths. She had consulted both doctors over the telephone. One had apparently said he would "look in again," the other that it "could do no harm." So cabs and messengers were sent in all directions, and wine brought back instantly in large quantities, and the baby extensively bathed.

She thought "it did do him good." So the treatment was continued.

Then one of the doctors "seemed so unsympathetic" she changed him for another. Then the other doctor recommended her putting the case into the hands of the great French brain specialist, and she had telephoned to him immediately. All the time the wine baths and other treatment had continued.

"And I was getting worn out with it all," she told me.

The great French specialist had come, had heard, as well as her French would let him, had seen the other doctors and the baby, and had decreed:

"A normal life, my dear madam, as for any other baby. Do not be alarmed, babies of this age often do not hold their heads up properly. He will grow out of it. A normal life as far as possible." And had departed.

Baby was now much better. "It was the wine baths which cured him," said Mrs. Boston.

"They would cure me," said Franklin, "of anything."

"Now, Franklin," said his wife. "Grandma's money couldn't be better spent on anything than on baby."

I asked if she were still going on with her painting. She said she didn't know. She had done a portrait of Franklin for the Salon, but her master had said it was "too small. Small pictures were no use for the Salon,

she must do a really big one." And so it was too late this year anyway. She wasn't sure she shouldn't take up singing instead. But just at present, now she could get about, they were "seeing a little of Paris." It seemed foolish to live there and not see it, especially when it cost so much to come over from home; and friends of hers in New York were always writing and asking her what this or that was like. "The New York papers, you know, get hold of all the latest French fashions and write them up."

"So Franklin's taking me round. Don't you think these restaurants real good?" she said. "We've almost given up dining at home. It saves a cab fare across Paris when we are going out, and they're so cheap anyway. At the Riche, now, you can get a most elegant meal for five francs. Of course there are extras. Can't you, Franklin?"

"The Riche? It isn't bad," said Franklin, "at the price. But that isn't where the French go themselves when they want something good."

"Franklin's finding out all about that, and we're going to try them all," said his wife. "Such queer places they are sometimes. We went to one the other night where they make a speciality of ducks. They just hardly cook it at all. And then they cut you off the breast, and the waiter brings the duck in a silver dish, and when the breast is cut, he puts it into a silver press and squeezes it and all the gravy runs out into the dish, and then you eat that."

"It sounds interesting," I said, "but you wouldn't get much each off the breast of one duck."

"Why you each have a duck," said Mrs. Boston. "We took a party when we went and there were eight ducks. Now you couldn't get that in Boston. Nor at Delmonico's either. And you'd pay four times as much. It's just the quaint ideas that I like in Paris so."

"Yes," I said, wondering very much myself how duck would taste like that, and knowing perfectly well that I should never taste it.

Mrs. Boston got up to go.

"It's the cutest little flat you've got here," she said. "If it wasn't for baby, it's just what I should like myself, wouldn't you, Franklin? No trouble with servants. They all steal so here," she added, putting on some expensive furs. "I'm sure I can never find my things at all. I'm always buying new ones. Now do come and see us soon. Come and dine with us at the restaurant and try the duck."

"I'm very busy," said Richard, "just now."

"So is Franklin, only he's taking a holiday, aren't you, Franklin?"

"I thought I'd give myself a little rest," said Franklin. "There's plenty of time."

"And we like Paris," said his wife, shaking hands, "don't you?"

But the words gave me somehow an unexpected stab. Was it the same Paris that we both liked so? And I thought of that queer American and the energy of his words:

"The rest Paris sends right down to hell."

It was long before I could shake off the impression of that visit, and still longer before we met the Americans again. Then the end was near.

PART V

PARTIES, PEOPLE, PRINCIPLES, AND THINGS

THE invitation came in a small white envelope on a visiting card:

“Madame Louis Martin,”

and then written underneath the name in a long sloping hand, the Italian hand of our grandmothers:

“Vous invite à prendre une tasse de thé le jeudi soir le 24.”

And in the corner opposite the printed address was written “8 heures.”

Madame Louis Martin was the wife of one of the senior professors of the Sorbonne. We neither of us attended his lectures, but I had come to know him in a roundabout way. Some one in London having given me an introduction to a professor of the Collège de France who was away, I had been passed on to his friend Monsieur Martin. And when I went, very nervous, to see the great man I had found instead, or as well (for Monsieur Martin appeared for a few minutes to speak to me about the business of “inscription” at the Sorbonne), his very charming wife, who seemed to make a speciality of entertaining students, and children, and stranded strangers, and friendless young men, beside the more distinguished members of a numerous acquaintance.

The day I went to see Monsieur Martin, I found the flat full of children and Madame Martin assisting a small child in pigtailed to play “a piece.” She got up from the piano at once, told Thérèse to remember the “f sharp”

at the end of the page, not to hurry the time, and led me into another room.

This was an annexe to the professor's study, a sort of storeroom for books and pamphlets—walls, floor, and doors were covered with them. Here in a wonderful nest of books where the one window and the middle of the ceiling were the only bookless parts, we sat, close together on two small chairs, and talked.

On Thursday afternoons in term-time, being the French half-holiday, Madame Martin told me she always received the children of her friends. (The Martins had no children of their own.) On Mondays she received the friends themselves, and she much hoped that now she had made my acquaintance she should have the pleasure of receiving me.

Madame Martin was a slim little woman, with a droop in her figure which told of suffering. She had smooth brown hair parted in the middle and brushed up on each side. It was coiled in carefully combed loops on the curve of her head. Every hair seemed always exactly where it ought to be and to stay where it had been put. She suffered terribly I heard "with her head" and her eyes had the look of it. But whenever I saw her she was always entertaining and entertained, full of a gentle bright pleasantness that was very attractive.

Once, when for some reason I went to the flat in the morning, though not much before twelve o'clock, I found her neat and dressed as ever, but dressed in a thick black cloth dressing gown, beautifully made and with the white ruffles of an obvious nightgown at neck and wrists. Her hair was veiled in a little white cap. She had black cloth slippers and carried a bunch of keys. It gave me a queer little shock of surprise at the time and the vivid realisation that I was in another land.

Madame Martin was much interested in my student-ship at the Sorbonne, and in the fact of my ménage which she had not known. She took the strange fact in

slowly, finding it very strange, and then pronounced it "charming," and expressed a wish to receive Richard as well. And a little while after came the card of invitation.

On the evening of the 24th, the Pentagon was full of preparation for the fête. My one eveningy dress (the distinction was apparent I fear) had been withdrawn from the depths of the altar. Richard was arrayed in correct dress clothes, white tie, etc. Summer outdoor shoes had been carefully cleaned. We had to walk there, of course, and shrouding the whole of our glory in our winter overcoats, we set out towards eight o'clock.

The "tasse de thé" to which we had been invited not sounding very substantial we had eaten dinner early in order to have time to wash-up, dress, and walk three-quarters of an hour across Paris, and reach the Martins' soon after eight.

The anteroom on which the front door of their flat opened was already full of coats and hats when it was opened to us, and Richard was instructed to leave his among them. I was taken down a narrow passage to a bedroom, which was very exactly the room of the bed, an elaborate bed covered with silk tapestry, and having nothing else, except a wardrobe, of the nature of a bedroom in it. Here I was about to remove my coat when a voice at the door said to the maid that:

"Madame had sent word she would upon reflection also require the 'chambre à coucher parcequ'il venait du monde.'"

So the maid, gathering up the various wraps which lay upon the silk tapestry of the bed, and adding mine to the number, opened a second door and deposited them somewhere inside, and then with a last look round to see nothing had been forgotten threw open a third door which led into the other rooms of the flat. Finally she came back to me and we went along the dark little passage again, collected Richard in the anteroom, and then were formally announced in the French version of

our name, which always made me think I must be somebody else.

My first impression was one of pure thanks, for Madame Martin, beautifully dressed, was in a gown of silky velvet which was not "evening." It had neither a low neck nor short sleeves. And when I looked round I found such a mixture of clothes, even down to morning coats worn by some of Monsieur Martin's own students, that any form of clothes almost would have passed.

Monsieur Martin was in correct evening dress, looking very learned and distinguished.

"I talk English," he said, "so long as I never stop." And proceeded to talk.

Richard was taken through an open door into the study, where various "confrères" were established, and where the men of the party, but never the women, would congregate. I was introduced as the "English madame who was a student of the Sorbonne" to the wives of two distinguished Frenchmen, who politely welcomed me in neat little speeches and then resumed their own conversation; so that the strain on my French relaxing, I could give my attention to the room.

Madame Martin was a wonderful hostess, she had eyes for everybody, but never a distracted attention when she spoke to you. If she saw you looking lonely she would always appear with just the new some one she thought would interest you, unless her rooms got so full she couldn't see at all. That was why we always enjoyed her little parties so much better than the bigger ones.

By some unwritten law Monsieur Martin's study which opened out of the drawing-room was left to the men. The "chambre à coucher" which opened out of the study was like the drawing-room used by every one when it was used at all. And one would see distinguished gentlemen in evening dress sitting on slender-legged bedroom chairs covered with tapestry, talking to elegant ladies squeezed between the wardrobe and the door,

Sometimes all the men would get into the study and stay there, and all the women would stay in the drawing-room just as though the open door was filled with invisible iron bars. I have even seen conversations going on between the seated sexes each side the doorway, and neither offering to cross it.

The "jeunes filles," when there were any, always kept together in a corner by themselves. One evening, Madame Martin created a great sensation among them by declaring she was going to "faire à l'anglaise" and brought up Frenchmen to introduce to them. The "jeunes filles" raised their eyes from the floor where they quite properly were keeping them, but only for a moment, and said, "Oui, monsieur," and "Non, monsieur," without too much embarrassment, though with a considerable amount of giggling at the excitement of this strange adventure. But the experiment did not seem to develop successfully and was not repeated.

The conversation of the "jeune fille" in society seems to consist exclusively of "Oui, monsieur," "Non, monsieur," "Oui, madame," "Non, madame," and of other such First Phrases for Beginners. I do not find the French young girl, and certainly not the French young man, very attractive, but matured into men and women they are charming. I do not know why the French young should be (or appear to be) so much less satisfactory than ours; nor why we should mature less well than they do. But middle age, a term unused in France, is the most attractive time in French life, and one when all seem in every way at their best.

After our first evening, we were often invited to "prendre une tasse de thé" at the Martins', and in course of time met many interesting and some celebrated people there. The tea, by the way (and also chocolate), was served with biscuits at the very end of the evening in the dining-room, and was the signal for instant dissolution. Many guests of course went before, one went

and came as one would. Sometimes on hot evenings lemonade and "sirops" were brought in in small glasses on a large tray. This was all the material refreshment, and no music or other form of entertainment was ever provided. Host and hostess and guests relied entirely upon the powers of each other's conversation, and relied successfully.

When we first went to Paris it was in the thick of the Dreyfus fight. Monsieur Martin was one of the professional élite who on expert palaeographic grounds had become Dreyfusards, and at one time Maître Labori, the Dreyfus advocate, was a conspicuous figure in their rooms. Conspicuous is the exact word, for he stood a tall, broad, fair man well over six feet high, and my memory of him is always of a fair head dominating a ring of other heads. He was a Normand, and had married, so I was told, "une Anglaise," that is an Australian who had come, I believe, to France in her extreme youth and had lived there ever since.

All was not always united within the circle of the Dreyfusards themselves. "Some," Madame Labori once declared with a certain amount of bitterness, "fought only for the man, while others were fighting for the principle."

The Dreyfus days were perhaps the most exciting of our evening "teas," little else was talked of then, and Paris, which at the time of Zola's magnificent *J'accuse* would have torn him into bits, and indeed nearly succeeded outside the law courts, would not allow him afterwards, so his wife said, to walk the streets in peace. In the country he was still in danger of receiving "des coups de pied."

"In consequence he would not vote at the election," she explained, "for nowhere could he go and give his vote in peace 'comme le dernier des épiciers.'"

I was so struck with the simile that I have never forgotten it, and grocers in consequence have taken on a political significance they never had before.

It was interesting to discover that the fight over Dreyfus was also a fight to send the educated man back into politics again, politics in France having fallen, the Dreyfusards said, into almost American disrepute.

"Behold, therefore, l'affaire Dreyfus."

Decent folk must be brought back to the ballot box or worse would befall. And according to some of the election addresses which papered the walls of Paris that winter, the other man would invariably have disgraced even a penal settlement. In our arrondissement, I remember, one candidate declared: "*He* stole neither his tailor's money nor his friends' wives." And the other man responded with: "I pay my bills."

The Dreyfus case divided the Sorbonne as it divided everything else, and it was not till its echoes were dying down that the Martins' teas took on their proper academic air. I found it all thrillingly exciting, but absolutely baffling.

The truth seems never really to have penetrated that mysterious affair, and so I was not altogether sorry when the Martins talked something else than Dreyfus, and the Dreyfusards mixed with others than themselves.

During one "tea," greatly to my joy, Madame Martin brought up Monsieur Faguet to introduce to me. Monsieur Faguet looked just as brown and just as twinkly as he did in his classroom, and was just as deliciously unconcerned with his surroundings and himself.

The dear little man recognised me, when reminded, as one of his students; and stood talking with all of himself in the most friendly manner, while every other moment the stiff front of his dress shirt (there must have been something wrong with it) would bulge and bulge till he patted it down. And he would try, when not otherwise engaged with them, to put his hands in his pockets which were sewn up; sewn up with thick thread in large stitches. I did so wonder if he had done it himself and why.

I imparted to him, I remember, a preference, since discarded, for Victor Hugo over the classics.

He listened to all I had to say, murmuring to himself the while, "Pas si bête. Pas bête du tout" (Not so stupid. Not stupid at all). "Elle a tort, mais ce n'est pas bête" (She's wrong, but it's not stupid).

Gustave France would also come walking through the rooms like invited royalty, and disappear into the study, where "le Maître" would hold a little court. He looked wonderfully distinguished and learned all the time, and slim, and silvery, and imposing. And every one always said:

"Have you seen Monsieur France this evening?" Although it was almost impossible somehow to miss seeing Monsieur France when he was anywhere to be seen.

One of the most interesting figures at the Martins' teas was Madame Dieulafoy. Madame Dieulafoy in trousers, swallow-tail coat, high collar, and a white tie was a somewhat disconcerting figure at first. She looked a slimlittish man, with much of the boy in the figure, till one saw a middle-aged face, wrinkled, sunburnt, fair, with small features and smooth hair. Madame Dieulafoy had worn trousers (or rather I suppose then knickers) from her youth up. Her parents, wealthy landowners, having only one girl and badly wanting a boy, had dressed her as one inside the seclusion of their own estates. Outside her home, and as the traditional "jeune fille," she had worn skirts. Then she married Monsieur Dieulafoy and went exploring with him in the deserts of Babylon (there is a whole *salle* named after them in the Louvre), and she wore trousers there. Finally with the permission of the police she wore trousers everywhere and all the time; but ordinary, fashionable men's trousers. I have watched her calling at Madame Martin's with a correct silk hat balanced on a slim knee. Whatever it was for her it was somehow disconcerting for others; and so

difficult to remember that this apparent man was really a woman all the time.

Monsieur Dieulafoy was large and broad with a bushy grey beard, and he used to stand sometimes with his hand on the boy's shoulder, till one suddenly realised the boy was his wife. Altogether it was rather electric when they were about.

I remember once in discussing cycling and the English lady's cycle and the Frenchwoman's "culotte" Madame Martin declared with emphasis:

"Eh bien moi, après tout, je préfère Madame Dieulafoy."

Madame Dieulafoy once asked me, I remember, why I was studying in France. And I said, concealing my real ambitions which were vaulting, that I hoped to do translation work later on. And she with the rather usual idea, I suppose, that translation work is hack work instead of some of the most difficult work in existence, lectured me roundly, though delightfully, on my want of ambition, declaring it the "greatest of faults in youth, and the parent of all foolishness."

I must own I felt completely sold. It was rather hard lines after having been scolded or laughed at so often for aiming too high when one had been led into telling the inner truth of one's desires, to be scolded now for not having them. However I couldn't help feeling it served me right after all, and being amused at my own expense. The energy of Madame Dieulafoy's attack interested me, but having once set me down as a poor ambitionless person she never talked to me again.

Old Monsieur Frédéric Passy, Pacifist, Protestant, and Patriarch, who lived at Passy in a sort of garden suburb of his own, inhabited by his children, and his children's wives, and his children's children, even by the children's children's wives and children, a wonderfully vigorous old man, short, broad, alert, came once, I remember, shortly before he received the Nobel Peace

Prize. Like most Pacifists he seemed an excellent fighter. There came in his train also a handsome young man who was the son of a converted priest, and whose career the Protestant community was watching with interest and some anxiety, for prejudice was strong against him.

Besides the celebrities, French and foreign, there were many personally interesting people. A very charming young professor with a brown beard and the brightest of brown eyes I remember distinctly, though if I ever knew I have long since lost his name. He was introduced to me towards the end of one evening, came with me into the dining-room, and talked to me all through the tea and chocolate drinking, and we were so well amused that I suddenly found to my horror that he and I and Richard were the lone last guests of the evening.

Then there was one of Monsieur Martin's students, a Belgian, a schoolfellow of Maeterlinck's, who told me stories of Maeterlinck's youth.

There was a charming old lady who took my heart and who always used to tell me "all about everybody else." There were the two nieces of another professor, who seemed the very quintessence of "jeune filledom," and so interested me. I met so few "jeune filles." They were good-looking girls and they sat together in the "jeune fille" corner and their eyes were always becomingly cast down or modestly raised when spoken to; and they said simple little sentences in low little voices.

Their aunt who generally sat near them was a rather formidable looking lady in half-mourning, even to her hair. I was much amused once when stranded near the "jeune fille" corner and unable to get out, I heard the two girls talking to themselves. The shrewd comments on the crowd, the slightly acid wit of the elder, were a revelation. Nothing was lost on them. But there was a certain pathos too. Though submitting to the convention which put and left them there, it irked. But, and here is the national trait, it was borne quite clear-

sightedly and unresentfully as part of the pattern of life. "Ma tante," too, was treated with every proper deference, though she did seem rather a dragon. But the "jeune fille" is coming out of her corner.

The last time I went to the Martins' some years after we had left the cubbyhouse, Madame Martin's rooms had bunches of "jeunes filles" who were not sitting in corners. There were "jeunes gens" too talking to them.

It was a most amusing evening. We had supper instead of the "tasse de thé," and Madame Martin walked about with a little list in her hand, and at intervals "learnt her lesson," as she said, for all the women were duly taken down, and the overflow men took one another. I was near a very vigorous "jeune fille" who was a great "féministe" and part of the supper table talked of "le vote" most of the evening.

There were about twenty people round a large oval table crammed up together tight, the host and hostess sat, as they do in France, opposite one another in the middle of each side; and there were odd men in corners eating over the heads of the sitters. And there were also at least eight conversations going on all at once at full speed and at top voice, conversations which every one joined and left as they felt inclined. Everybody listened to everybody else, and everybody talked at the same time, and ate too. I was implored by the "jeune fille" near me to "tell all the latest news from London, and whether 'la Pankhurst' was in or out of prison at the moment."

And I had to talk so loudly to be heard, and so long, and all in French too, that next morning I woke up without any voice at all. But it was certainly one of the most amusing evenings I have ever spent.

The Martins had just moved into a new flat which was fitted with electric light that at the moment wouldn't light, and we had large lamps, and small lamps, and proper drawing-room lamps, and improper kitchen lamps all over the flat. There was even a little 2½d. tin

thing on the drawing-room piano discovered by Madame Martin to her pretended horror in the middle of the evening, and which we all pretended we had thought part of the decorations. Finally by a plebiscite properly taken with "le vote" duly accorded to the women, it was solemnly inducted to a position of honour in the middle of the mantelpiece. I don't think I have ever heard so trivial a thing turned to so much good conversational use as was that little tin lamp.

Madame Martin came and had a special chat with me, and explained, I remember, in the course of it, that the older she grew the more she wanted young people round her, and so she was eliminating age at her evenings, and "tous ces gros bonnets qui sont si ennuyants" (all those bigwigs who are so boring). And then she left me to talk babies with Madame Psichari, the wife of the poet, Renan's grandson.

Madame Martin was in every way a charming hostess, whether at her "evening teas" or at her afternoon "at homes." All through our cubbyhouse years I used to go and call properly at intervals.

Madame Martin always sat at the right-hand corner of her drawing-room fireplace, and beyond her down the room came a row of chairs of all kinds; and fronting them, and on the other side of the fireplace, came another row of chairs of all kinds. When I came to know other professorial drawing-rooms (though not every one was the same) I found how much less formal hers was than the others. I have seen these rows of chairs set out with almost mathematical exactitude, like two rows of nigger minstrel seats, sometimes quite straight, sometimes slightly curved. All the seating accommodation of the room, whether low chairs, or high chairs, or easy chairs, or ordinary chairs, or sofas, is all drawn into these two lines which front one another from the fireplace roomwards. From a conversational point of view it has its advantages, everybody can share in the same conversa-

tion, and the hostess, if she sits about the middle of the row, is equally near everybody, even though all the chairs may be filled. And she never has to peer about and find chairs for incoming visitors.

There was various etiquette to be learned, as, for example, not to forget to add madame or mademoiselle or monsieur to the end of one's sentences, especially short ones; never to say "non" or "oui" or similar things by themselves; never, never to cross one's legs whatever happened; to remember to take leave directly one became the oldest caller of any sized group.

The maid showed one into the room, but Madame Martin always escorted each guest out of it to the flat door, or at least to the flat hall, which gave one a chance one might not have had before for a word with her in private; on the other hand, it left among callers who perhaps did not know one another a sort of dumbness difficult to break.

One might call at any hour after two and before six. And if one happened to be there about five o'clock Madame Martin offered tea; French tea, very thin and very weak, taken with plenty of sugar and often no milk, and served each cup and saucer on a dainty napkin which one placed in one's lap, and used to put biscuits on, or "petits fours"—tiny sweet cakes. Sometimes in the summer there were "sirops" as well or instead. Many callers did not take tea at all. And it was not necessary either to serve it to every one or to stay until it was served. It was brought in at the proper hour of five o'clock, hence its French name "le five o'clock," and also its verb to "five o'clocker," meaning to take tea. One can even hear now such phrases as:

"Mais venez donc demain five o'clocker avec moi."

"Volontiers, à quelle heure?"

"Vers les quatre."

And if those who happened to be there liked tea they took it.

I can see Madame Martin now, sitting on her own particular chair in the corner of the open fireplace where on two iron dogs large logs of wood were always burning, her little frail figure with its delicate droop so plainly outlined against the oblong of the window behind her. The grand piano at the end of the long room, the beautiful etching on its easel, the lovely little tanagra figures on the mantelpiece. The air of quiet richness, of elegant studiousness, and then the charm of her exquisite French, of her gentle pleasantness which never rose exactly to wit and yet was such good fun. And how kind she was to me, a stranger, putting as it were herself and her Frenchness at my service; always ready to answer questions and discuss rival theories and national customs and habits.

One afternoon, I remember, when I found her almost alone, on some point of "*jeune filledom*," she told me the whole story of her marriage. On her eighteenth birthday her father suddenly woke up to the fact that she was eighteen.

"*Tiens, Toinette*," he said, "*tu as véritablement dix-huit ans, alors c'est l'âge de te marier*" (You are really eighteen, then it's time to marry you).

"Papa," she had replied, for he was always a most indulgent father, "*j'aimerais bien un professeur*."

Then papa (who was I think a banker) sought among his acquaintance for a suitable some one who had a professor for a son, and he found young Monsieur Martin.

So young Monsieur Martin came to be inspected, and Toinette, when she was not too embarrassed to look at anything, took a good look at him. And when asked by papa afterwards what she thought, had thought "yes." Young Monsieur Martin on his side had also apparently thought "yes," so the "*fiançailles*" were concluded, and the wedding shortly afterwards took place.

"Did you see him much in between?" I asked.

Madame Martin considered. "My mother made several parties," she said, "and of course there was the 'grand dîner de fiançailles,' and papa indulged me in a ball. C'est tout. O que les premiers jours la maison me manquait! Et cette première sortie!"

"La première sortie," I exclaimed, thinking it some new rite, "mais qu'est-ce que c'est que cela?"

"The first time of going out after one is married."

"But going out, where to?" I said still blank.

"Just going out, into the street, anywhere, unaccompanied."

"C'est terrible," said the other caller, "je m'en souviens bien. Le cœur me manquait deux fois."

"And I," said Madame Martin, "I dressed myself and stood a whole long morning looking out of the window not daring to take the plunge."

"My sister," said the one other caller, "never has been out alone yet. She was married to an army officer, and at first he was always able to go with her. And then when the baby came she went out with it and the nurse, and now her two daughters are grown up she of course accompanies them."

I could hardly believe my ears.

"And," added Madame Martin, summing up, "aujourd'hui même je ne le fais que parce que je dois. En vérité je ne l'aime pas" (Even to-day I only do it because I ought. In truth I do not like it).

"And I went to school quite alone," I said, "when I was eight, down the road and round the corner. And twenty minutes to school by train before I was twelve."

And they were quite as surprised as I was.

"Quelle différence de mœurs!" was all we could mutually exclaim.

It was quite easy to discern after listening to conversations in madame's drawing-room that the whole pivot of French family life is the tie between parents and children,

not that between husband and wife. This is the relation which comes first. The one to which duty goes as a matter of course, and it makes all the difference in the outlook. French parents do not like either sons or daughters to go far away from them. And sons and daughters do not like to go. They draw the ties very close. And the most poetic and appealing thing to French emotion is the love between mother and son. Any study of French *five sous* fiction or popular melodrama will soon reveal this as a stock appeal sure and certain of success. It happens too in real life. I myself have seen it.

Once when we were far away in the High Alps of Dauphiné, at a little inn at the head of a valley thirty-nine miles from a railway, there came to it as a guest an old peasant woman of the neighbourhood with her two sons. They came in a motor-car. One son was a rich business man in Paris, the other a peasant farmer in the valley. The rich son had driven down in his motor from Paris to his old home, and brought his mother and brother up here for a few days' holiday. The old mother had never been in a hotel before. Its dinners and its ways were strange to her. She wore a little crossed check shawl over her shoulders and a white cap on her head. Her sons sat each side of her. I sat opposite, and I watched how carefully they helped her, and guided her among the details of a hotel dinner table. She was perfectly and beautifully at ease. And the unaffected devotion of her sons, especially the rich one from Paris, was a poem. I gathered he came down every year to see her, and all the time it was:

"Tu es bien, mère?"

"Oui, mon fils."

Or perhaps, "Vas-y voir si mère est bien, veux-tu, Antoine?" (Go and see if mother is all right, will you, Anthony?)

"She is not alone?"

"Non, la cousine est là" ("la cousine" lived somewhere near the hotel), "mais elle aura peut-être besoin de quelque chose" (Cousin's there; but perhaps she will be wanting something).

And "mère" herself. A peasant woman, old, wrinkled, silent, with hands hardened by field work, a quiet voice, steady eyes, and a face of evening calm.

One morning when I came to breakfast I found her sitting alone at the window, her hands on her lap, watching her sons get out their motor-car and start down the mountain road. I watched them too. When they had gone out of sight, she still sat looking out of the window down the road after them.

She sat quite still, sideways to the window and to me, so that the profile of the old face showed plainly against the window's light. The check shawl was fastened with a large brooch. Her feet rested side by side on the little French tabouret. "Mère" was so still that when my breakfast came I had almost forgotten her, and I looked up with a little start of surprise to find her steady eyes looking, not down the road now, but at me.

"Madame comes from far," she said.

"Yes, from very far, from England."

"That is beyond the mountains?"

"Oh, yes, from far beyond the mountains."

"Beyond Paris?"

"Yes, beyond Paris, beyond the sea."

"Ah, je ne connais pas." She answered simply. "I come from here, and know only my own little 'pays.'"

I said it was a very beautiful one.

"Yes," she answered, "it is beautiful, but hard. One works much too hard and long to get bread for the children. And then there is not always room for them. When they grow up, they must go away to work." And she turned her head and looked down the road again.

I asked if her sons were gone far.

No, and they would soon be back. It had been hard to make them go at all. They would not believe she could be "well" without them.

"Nor am I," she said and smiled.

Then in that quiet voice which went on so gently and so calmly she told me of her children, of her fields, of her harvests wrung from a hard soil, of the long months of winter when the valleys were wrapped in snow, when each house was a world to itself; when the wind swept down from the mountains and froze the chickens on their perches, when the fear of wolves hid in every shadow.

"Wolves!" I exclaimed.

"Mais oui, dans ma jeunesse il venait des loups. Même maintenant on a peur. On a toujours peur" (But yes, in my youth there came wolves. Even now one is afraid. One is always afraid).

And the sound of her voice, as she said it, put back the terror into the word which all the stories, that have come down to us, show so plainly it once had.

Then she told me how each house prepared for the winter, how it stored its food, stabled its cows and sheep, penned up its fowls, all quite near, or even under the house. Took care that its roof was solid, that the winds would not uproot it or the snows carry it away; laid in its stores and stores of wood; made its little paths when the first snow fell to the well and roadway; built itself screens against the wind; and then when the post no longer came up the valley, shut itself in and lived its long winter alone.

"C'est triste?" I asked, remembering I had heard the hotel-keeper's wife tell how she had been caught up here one autumn and had found it "triste, mais triste, triste," till the weather allowed her to flee down to the railway station and the town. "Mère" looked thoughtfully out of the window.

"Il faut qu'on s'aime bien" (One must love well), she said.

And I got a lightning picture as she said it of Hate shut up together in one house, shut in together in one house, and the days going . . . and the weeks going . . . and the months going . . . and the world all white and full of fury, or white and still . . . only Hate alive.

"Oui, il faut qu'on s'aime bien."

Down the road there came the sound of a motor-car.

"Ils viennent," she said, "mes fils" (They come, my sons).

Then she turned to me:

"C'est la plus belle chose de la vie. Madame permet que je la souhaite à madame." (It is the most beautiful thing in life. Madame permits that I wish it to madame).

Before I could reply the voice of Antoine came through the window.

"Ah, te voilà, mère. Tu es bien?"

"Très bien, mon fils."

So I went away and left them. But "mère" I have never forgotten, nor could forget.

There is behind the French relationship just this poetic tradition of "la plus belle chose de la vie" which gives the mark of the difference to our conception. It may be that it comes somewhat as the tribute to the proper handling of the power of the French parent over the destinies of his children which is so much greater than ours. It has never ceased to give me a shock to hear French parents say, "Quand je marie mon fils, ma fille" quite casually as the most ordinary thing in the world.

And the logic on which it all rests is the argument that the parent is so much more likely to know what are the permanent tastes of the child than that child is at the susceptible age of twenty. And the argument that there is so much more in marriage, especially in the most successful marriages, than passion, or love divorced from reason and respect, that passion passes, and that there is a sort of inherent fitness of things. That the

welfare of the coming children must be thought for and remembered; and that all this needs a more considered and a maturer judgment than the young people are likely to bring to it themselves.

Our ideal of a happy marriage is of a prolonged honeymoon, the French that of an enduring friendship. I should not like to say which of us attains most often its ideal, but this I do know that the majority of the men and women in France, which means married men and women, married in this way and under these conditions, are charming men and women; are, especially women, of a wonderful worth. That something has improved, has altered them out of all recognition almost from the "*jeunes gens*" they once were. And that I cannot say the same for us. But which is cause and which effect I do not know. Perhaps the repression of the "*jeune fille*" and the licence of the "*jeune homme*," each bad, both thrive by the exchange that marriage brings. That is easy to say, and maybe true though it does not go very far, but what is at the root on our side? Is it that we conceive of marriage too much as personal freedom and happiness, not as the French do of a duty, a pleasant duty, but one that must be carefully performed; and that this has a better effect on character? I wonder and wonder, and do not know, but undoubtedly there is something at work, some condition, some influence which makes French men and women past their first youth charming and of so much worth.

And the thing which does them I think the greatest injustice is their own literature. No one I am sure could possibly evolve the real Frenchman, certainly never the real Frenchwoman, out of a study of their modern literature.

The supposed necessity of the novel and the play to take sexual love (the love interest) as its inevitable subject, and the impossibility of making the unmarried girl the heroine of such a subject has almost driven

French authors into adultery. How else can they get the love interest? To make every heroine a widow would be ridiculous.

In classical times the love-making was correct, and the difficulty escaped by putting the emphasis elsewhere. Corneille makes patriotism (*Le Cid*, *Horace*, etc.) or religion (*Polyeucte*) his real subject. Molière takes every other subject almost but love, and his one play in which the "triangle" occurs (*George Dandin*) was written not for the love interest but to show the unhappy results of social *mésalliance*. Even Racine, the writer of love poetry, gives us, except in *Phèdre*, always correct love-making. The clash of love and duty, the duties of state, as in *Bérénice*, where some of his most charming love passages occur. Or he too puts the emphasis elsewhere as in *Britannicus*, *Iphigénie*, not to mention *Esther* and *Athalie*. While the novels of the period, crammed with "respectful addresses" as they were, are just ancient romances brought up to date, with sugar-plum princesses as the objects to be attained after much fighting and enormous trials.

Le grand Cyrus, a modest little novel in ten books and twenty volumes, the "best seller" of its day, which was devoured by all the fashionable world of the Grand Siècle, which Madame de Sévigné read "several times" (!), and which still remains a name in French literature if nothing else, is a record of exalted affection, not only of Cyrus whose history even from birth up only accounts for a small fraction of its twenty volumes, but of all the other princes and princesses whose stories are recorded in this monumental work. All the heroines whose names might quite well play family coach together are "la plus belle personne du monde et la plus vertueuse." All the heroes "le plus brave prince qui ait jamais existé." The rôle of princes and princesses is simply that of all novelettes, the one to be brave, the other to be beautiful, and both immaculately honourable under all circum-

stances. It is the story which counts. (I say this in spite of the interminable conversations of the *Grand Cyrus*. Think of the scale!) And the story which must have carried the reading public of its day along through its twenty 800-paged volumes. That I suppose, and the quantity of its most respectful and very sentimental love-making. Exactly as that is supplied to-day by the luscious love-making of Mrs. Barclay, or more primitively still in the penny novelettes devoured in their millions. It is interesting, even pathetic, to find how many of our solid common-sense, unromantic, middle-aged housewives of all classes will devour stories drenched, so to speak, with a beautiful love-making, as though seeking still after an ideal which life has not brought them. A little pathetic that they should still seek, a little beautiful that they should seek it there.

Even the eighteenth century, though beginning to state its case differently, kept its love-making correct and subordinate, still putting its real interest largely elsewhere, as in *Figaro* and in the "Cri du sang" and the "Croix de ma mère" motifs of Voltaire; while Marivaux continued the correct love-making, adding the sentimental artificialities to which he has given his name: les Marivaudages. But *La Nouvelle Héloïse* with its moral married heroine, and *Manon Lescaut* with its courtesan heroine, struck another note, not quite new it is true—the *Princesse de Clèves* was also married—but now continuous.

It stood perhaps in French customs that to describe real love-making to a "jeune fille" as distinct from the entirely romantic love of the previous novels seems more improper than to make improper love to a married woman, and so the modern author with his one subject had little choice. The nineteenth century wanted "real" life in its love-making, and had to take it in the only place where it could be found. So the adultery tradition got itself fixed. Then the "unliterary literature"

following suit, supplying its public as usual with plenty of love-making, supplied it not with the respectful romantic stuff previously the tradition, but with the new adulterous type. And this, of course, has been seized on by foreigners as representing French ideals and manners, and "static" French ideals and manners at that, instead of merely another fashion of writing in a literature already ten centuries old, different from that which went before and different to that which is coming after . . . already, indeed, a change is coming. The emphasis seems to me to be altering. French novels of to-day are finding their interest elsewhere again. What was once "*the subject*" now comes in, if it comes, as a mere cliché, a remnant, or perhaps a concession to a once powerful tradition.

Quite distinct from this, though seizing on it with avidity, is something which does come down through all French literature, that is what literary historians call politely "*L'esprit gaulois*," which is just wit playing with obscenity. This is an integral part of French character and has always got itself expressed in French art. It was so in the Middle Ages from the *Chansons de geste* to Rabelais; in the classical period as, for example, in the *Contes* of La Fontaine ("Je ne lui reproche pas d'en avoir fait," said Monsieur Faguet once in class, "seulement d'en avoir fait deux volumes." I do not reproach him with writing them, only with writing two volumes. Which is typical). It was in the eighteenth century (*Candide*, for example), and perhaps ever will be. And this, of course, made the most of itself under the literary tradition of the nineteenth century, and accounts so largely for our present day, our now happily passing day, view of France.

L'esprit gaulois is a fact in French art which has to be faced. Perhaps the best way to face it is to realise that it has the same unpleasant effect on us as our blood and brutality motif has on the French.

"How disgusting," we say.

"How brutal," they reply.

"What wit is there in a dirty story?"

"What jest is there in a broken head?"

Both tastes are equally primitive, and if in art they have preserved one, we have kept the other.

I saw it once argued that a taste for blood was better than a taste for dirt. It seems rather a matter of want of taste, neither is really desirable. But it is surprising how much of this blood and brutality there is in our literature when one looks at it with French eyes. Equally from the Middle Ages, through our own classical times, down to the present day it can be found in abundance. Shakespeare himself was anything but free from it, and it was exactly this which the French found so hard to get over. If we find parts of, say, Anatole France not to our liking, parts of, say, Kipling are equally unpleasant to French taste. And our unliterary literature is full of it. Is not the very name of Penny Dreadful and Shilling Shocker and Blood and Thunder fiction witness enough; but that it appears equally in the best of our literature we have not perhaps realised, though the tearing out of Gloster's eyes and Fielding's horrible "Battle sung by the Muse in Homeric Style," even Dickens' death of Nancy, should have opened our eyes. Let us realise then that this shocks the French exactly as their "*esprit gaulois*" shocks us. Let us admit that both are equally undesirable, and we shall have gone a long way towards understanding.

We learned to know other professors and their wives before we left, and many an interesting trait in French character came to me through them. Those little unnoticed familiar traits that were so much a matter of course that no one thought of speaking of them, and which just happened out in the turn of a phrase perhaps.

"Monsieur a fait un long voyage?"

"Mais oui, très long," (and one's thoughts instinctively counted in months at least, while one listened, to be brought up short with) "très long, de cinq semaines."

I remember, too, hearing some one talking of Rome say to Madame Zola, "Of course you must have stayed there a long time."

And Madame Zola reply, "Oh but yes, my husband wished to be quite documenté for his book, so we stayed six weeks."

And many a little remark that showed how much closer are family ties, how much larger a place the family holds in everybody's life; and how the centre of it all is the relation between parent and child. And also, very unconsciously on their part and yet again and again, the strong sense of duty, and the cheerful courageousness with which it is faced. So that I would ask myself over and over again why the heroine of the modern French novel was as she was, and where the French author found her.

It is true I had seen once the two mondaines at the opera, and once I remember in a railway carriage (the guard had put us in a First because of the crowd) I found a young wife with a middle-aged husband, a small boy, and a nurse. She was pretty with a milk-white prettiness. She was extravagant, and thoughtless, that was obvious in two minutes, and she made fun of her husband to the maid, and some sort of a plot they undoubtedly were hatching together. I have never forgotten her. She also might have come out of the French novel. But for the rest, for those I really met and knew, it was so absurdly impossible that I began to wonder when some French author would make a startling scoop by putting the real Frenchwoman into his works, the real Frenchwoman under real conditions.

The intimate domesticity of French life is a thing the stranger rarely sees, or has a chance of seeing, it is so

screened off from the world. We live our lives, as it were, on one plane, the home. We take our visitors into it and entertain them there. We have founded and we keep up the institution of the spare room. For the time being our guests become part of our domestic life. But in France the thing is divided. Family life is a thing apart; it is the life of the family. And social life is also a thing apart, lived to a great extent outside the home; and because it is outside, on the boulevard, in the café, it is so much more apparent, and gives rise to the curious idea that the French have no home life.

I always remember it being impressed upon me in my youth that the French language had no word for home as a proof that the French had no such thing. In our sense perhaps they haven't, but they have that much more intimate thing, that very closely guarded thing, that something almost not to be profaned by a strange footstep, the "chez soi." It is as if the English tried (being perhaps bored with home) to bring the world into it, while the French (being perhaps tired of the world) made a little home away from it. The café, the boulevards, the restaurants, the "promenade de dimanche" satisfy the social instincts, the closely guarded "chez soi" the need for personal privacy. And this outdoor satisfaction of the social needs shows plainly, as do so many other customs, the southernness of France.

The climate of Paris differs really very little from that of London. It is slightly drier, that one realises by the thirst which pursues one during the first weeks of arriving there. There are fewer grey days and more blue ones, but otherwise there is really very little difference, and yet every restaurant and every café in Paris serves half its clientèle out of doors; and does it, though with diminishing numbers, still numbers, through the winter months too. Force of circumstances, meteorological, has put up glass screens against the wind, glass roofs against the rain, and big open coke fires burning in braziers

against the cold, and so provided for, the Frenchman still continues to sit and drink his "apéritifs," his liqueurs, or his coffee slowly out of doors.

Think of the force of that desire to sit out of doors which can drive café proprietors out for profits only to put up glass screens, glass roofs, and burn coke fires. Richard used to shudder when he saw them, unable to conceive of any one wanting to sit out of doors in a biting east wind, say, or on a slushy snowy day when the thin flakes melted as they fell. But French people did.

I grew more and more convinced as I saw more and more of France that while all parts have contributed to the whole it is the "Midi" which has given its flavour to France. The "Midi" which is, as it were, the root of France. The "Midi" vigorous and overflowing which sends its force up and out over the whole body of the land. The "Midi" whose whole atmosphere is an atmosphere of growth. I may be quite wrong, but did I need to look to see what France would do, would become, it is to the "Midi" I should look. Life is so there.

One finds this southern touch in many things besides the far-reaching habit with which so much else is bound up, of taking one's social life out of doors: in the power of intoxication by ideas, or emotion, for example; or in the eating of "dessert" instead of puddings with its probable but unknown effect on character, for the study of diet as it moulds human beings is a science as yet in its infancy. One finds it in all sorts of customs such as the cult of the dead; in traits of character as that strange reticence of the south, so different from northern reserve; in its power to be passionately logical, passionately excited, intoxicated, yet not necessarily out of hand. The passion of the south has mostly a hard core of conscious sense at its heart; therefore maybe it can afford to be passionate more often. France can sweep away governments in revolution and still continue its daily life almost undisturbed.

That cool head in the midst of hot passion is what the slower moving north, which knows passion and coldness separately, finds so difficult to grasp. To me when I think of it the flavour of the south comes up through France just as the goatherd wanders through the Paris streets.

I have never forgotten him. A quaint, long, sunburnt figure, in a wide black hat. A little reed pipe at his lips. His flock of goats evenly behind. Every week he came down the boulevard and through the streets of the quarter, the plaintive notes of his pipe sounding thinly in the city's air, blurred by the city's traffic. He roamed the whole quarter. We met him by the Luxembourg. We saw him near the railway station, or going down the Boul' Miche in the winter twilight. And always in mid-afternoon he would pass beneath the windows of the cubbyhouse. And the thin pipe's notes mounted up and up.

"Mais oui. Il vient du midi," said Madame Weisman when I asked her. "Du vrai midi, always shepherds like that come from the south. He sells warm milk" (meaning milk straight from the cow) "for invalids, the good milk of goats."

Did he then sit on the kerb and milk his flock I wonder. Never, never, in cubbyhouse days did I ever see him sell his milk. But always he went through the streets of the city, his reed pipe at his mouth, his goats evenly behind. And the thin pipe's notes, so few, so few, so tremulous, came plaintive through the city's noise.

Another strange street cry which went down the boulevard every morning early, mounting up to us through the open window while we lay in bed, was that of the groundsel seller. He carried a basketful of small bunches of groundsel and he had a little song which it took us long and long to understand, for he sang:

"Il ne faut pas oub ——" Then there was a long wait while he walked round the corner and half down the

side street before he finished with "lier vos petits oiseaux."

Which puzzled us tremendously, until one bright and never-to-be-forgotten day we put the two halves together and made it out: "Il ne faut pas oublier vos petits oiseaux" (You must not forget your little birds).

"Oub," as we called him, was quite a friend. I never bought groundsel of him not having any birds, but when I had discovered what he sang, I went to investigate his cry and found the neatest little bundles of fresh groundsel all sprinkled with water in his basket which he sold at three for a halfpenny.

Another street cry for which we used to listen was known in cubbyhouse language as "Broken-heart."

Broken-heart chanted a chant of great sweetness, having really a charming voice with such a quality of sadness in it that I thought her heart must really be broken, and wondered what could be the purport of her song. Nor could we ever discover the words, often as we would listen to them, often as we would stop whatever we were doing to listen to them. Only the sad, sweet, short song came up to us.

I invented innumerable histories for Broken-heart. We racked our brains and our ingenuity to think of possible and impossible things to sell or trades to cry which would fit the sadness of the song. And then one day, one fatal day, Richard met her face to face in the boulevard, the song still sad upon her lips, and upon her head the traditional three hats one above the other of the old clothes dealer, while a pair of trousers round her neck and two coats over her arm left no remaining doubt. Broken-heart was nothing but a wardrobe purchaser crying, "Old clothes, old clothes, to buy or sell."

The Goatherd, Oub, and Broken-heart were our very special street criers, but of course there were many others. All the Four Season Traders, "Marchands des

Quatre Saisons," as they are called, who sell the green-groceries of the moment: the roasted chestnut man, with his brazier on a barrow; the shellfish sellers with oysters, Portuguese at fourpence a dozen, and black mussels which the French eat in several ways, including boiling them for soup; and so on. These were all to be found in the streets of the quarter far more largely it seemed to me than in similar streets in England: and there seemed also less prejudice in buying from them than with us. Perhaps they are more reliable. They certainly shared something of my butcher's enthusiasm for their own wares and exercised some art in the arranging of them.

They were usually old men of a subdued demeanour. Some seemed to have preserved a kind of childlike wonder at the world, or perhaps a childlike inability to deal with it, which had made them what they now were. I shall never forget overtaking two old men pushing their barrows along side by side as I was going to market one day, and overhearing one say to the other in tones of cheerful envy:

"Te voilà aristocrate maintenant" (You're an aristocrat now).

And the other old man gleefully replying as he held up two poor shrunken hands clad in coarse woollen mittens:

"Ah mes mitaines, qu'elles sont élégantes, n'est ce pas?"

Would one of our costers describe his mittens as elegant I wonder.

The story of one coster as we saw it develop before our eyes was almost like a Self Help biography from the pen of Dr. Samuel Smiles. It began with three or four cabbages, half a dozen half-penny bunches of herbs, as many penny ones of "pot-au-feu" vegetables (carrots, turnips, leeks, onions), and some salads on a barrow. The barrow when we first noticed it would stand on the

edge of the pavement in the little street leading from the boulevard Montparnasse to the rue Notre Dame des Champs. It would stand there apparently just as long as the Sergent de Ville would allow it, and being in an unimportant side street it wasn't hurried. The cabbages, saladings, and herbs were sold by an energetic woman, the barrow was pushed by a mild and rather listless man, who took little part in the selling.

Almost opposite the place where the barrow stood a large white block of buildings was rising slowly skywards, expensive flats fronting the boulevard, less expensive ones on the street side, moderate ones above, shops on the ground floor. There was a hoarding round part of the building, and one day to our surprise we observed the three or four cabbages, the half dozen bunches of herbs, the "pot au feu," the saladings, carefully displayed on a plank in a sort of two-sided alcove in the hoarding. The barrow turned up on its side supported the plank.

Time passed, some of the flats were finished and occupied. The cabbages had multiplied in number and kind. Potatoes both for eating and for soup had been added to the store. The mild and listless man assisted now in the selling to the extent of handing newspaper to his wife when necessary to wrap up the purchases. Two bits of wood had been nailed on the hoarding for a roof.

Time passed again. And the plank had become two shelves on trestle supports. The barrow had disappeared. Cauliflowers and other greenstuff were added to the cabbages and the salads. The energetic woman had a new blue apron.

And again time passed. More flats were occupied and the alcove in the hoarding had been turned into a roofed and narrow lean-to shed with several shelves.

Time passed again. Its next improvement was boards to shut it up at night. And steadily its stock in trade

increased. All the cheaper season's vegetables were now displayed upon its shelves. Its salads grew in variety and expensiveness. Apples and oranges took up a corner to themselves. We became enthralled in its triumphant progress.

Time passed again. And there came a floor, actually a neatly boarded floor. A little later and the trestles were gone and the shelves were fixed, and ran all round the four sides of it leaving a door space at one corner.

Time passed again. Then the front was boarded in beneath the counter. And a little wooden shop with roof, floor and sides, shelves, shutters, and door appeared complete. The mild and listless man had quite a busy time now running errands for his wife, weighing potatoes at her bidding. We wondered what would happen when the block of buildings was finished and the hoarding down.

Then one day it happened. We passed to see the shop empty, the workmen carting away the last of the hoarding. The flats were finished.

Richard and I were quite concerned. We went down that street every day, hoping against hope to see at least the cabbages and the barrow re-appear, but there came no woman and no barrow. Only on one side beneath the last finished flats a new shop was being fitted up, a gorgeous new shop in keeping with the expensive flats.

In three days it was opened. "B. Guérin" it said in gold letters on the top, adding in smaller writing "Légumes" on one side and "Primeurs" on the other. And there inside behind satisfactory stores of fresh vegetables and fruit, in a white apron, stood our lady of the barrow. Her mild and listless husband had an errand basket on his arm which she was filling full for delivery. There were paper bags upon the counter. We felt the epic was complete.

There are many queer little shops that are no shops in Paris. Down our street, a few houses away and next door to the coal shop, was a little box in the wall, with a ticket hole in front where an old man sat who mended shoes. All his tools hung round him on the walls of his box, and the leather sat on the floor. You knocked on the ticket office window or called through the hole, and he lifted it up and took your boots in while you stood on the pavement and explained your needs. He was a dear old man, the cobbler, with big silver spectacles and a wrinkled mild face who talked very little, and that in a low inward voice, an even, cheerful, meditative voice that won on me strangely. And his leather all had histories for him as he fingered it, and he would tell you he would:

“Mettre un morceau de ce Berrichon parce qu’il tiendra mieux que le Champenois,” or translated, “I’ll put a piece of this Yorkshireman, he’ll hold better than the Somerset.”

I am not sure of the provinces, but that was the way of it always.

His box was really a bit cut off the shop of the coalman, and in consequence was painted gaily with all the queer bright colours which are peculiar to the “charbonnier” in Paris; sort of broken poles of colour in slanting rows that don’t quite meet. I do not know why. Nor why all “charbonniers” are Auvergnats. The Parisians say it is because they like dirt. They are a swart, squat race, a race apart, and one which has kept apart through the centuries. It is said that they belong to the pre-Gallic inhabitants of France, and go back to the dimmest past of the country. France has never really assimilated the Auvergnats, they are still a kind of un-nomadic gypsy in the land, distinct in features and in dialect. There is an old nursery rhyme which children sing after the Auvergnats which runs:

"O comme nous nous amusâmes
 Chez Madame Couquelinat,
 Nous n'étions ni hommes ni femmes,
 Nous étions tous Auvergnats,"¹

which expresses something of the feeling. The Auvergnats are neither quite Frenchman nor Frenchwoman, they are Auvergnat.

As Paris buys its coal largely by the sack, the "charbonnier" really keeps a coal shop not a yard. He brings it to you on his back, up the staircase, and shoots it into the wooden drawer which is under every kitchen range in Paris. Of course some people have coal in larger amounts in their cellars (flats have each a small piece of cellar as they have each a room on the sixth), but then there is the labour of carrying it up from the cellar to the flat to consider. So charbonnier shops abound. They also sell charcoal in all sizes, as well as logs and wood for lighting fires. You can take the charcoal away in a paper bag if you like.

If the coal shops are really shops in Paris, the chemists' on the other hand are not at all like shops, but have much more the air of banks or consulting rooms. But then their owners are university men with a degree, and a chemist's is a profession not a trade. There is very little to sell in their windows, and inside there are comfortable green velvet chairs, possibly a glass counter with nothing on it, perhaps a few syphons on shelves. Chemists all make syrup drinks in great varieties, drinks which are partly medicinal, largely appetising. And all chemists wear long white linen coats.

The herbalist's, on the other hand, is really a shop selling bunches, large and small, of all sorts of dried herbs, mostly for making "tisanes," selling remedies

¹ "Oh, how we amused ourselves
 At Madame Couquelinat's,
 We were neither men nor women,
 We were all Auvergnats."

too for warts or baldness or other ailments of a like kind. His shop is always full and very popular. I myself have often bought dried lime leaves to make tea with and drink as a remedy for colds. It certainly seems to send one to sleep, and is quite a mildly pleasant hot drink to take.

Another quaint little street scene which we used to watch with interest and which we called the "Cours Fermés for Lamplighters," took place every afternoon in winter just before dark, on a quiet part of the boulevard Raspail. Many of the streets of our quarter were still lighted with gas, and the lamplighter was still a familiar figure on the pavement. But the real reason why some dozen or more of them should assemble every afternoon on the broad gravel path of the Raspail in a ring round one grey-headed old man who seemed their leader I do not know. But afternoon after afternoon there they were, in their blue blouses and peaked caps, with their long brass-capped poles in their hands, listening to the orations of the greyhead with all the subdued boredom of a badly taught class. We decided they were suffering from courses on lamplighting, theoretical, practical, and historical, and would have much liked to sample the lectures. But it was really impossible to get near enough to hear, as the ring with its long poles kept at so respectful a distance from the orator as to shut him off from outside eavesdroppers. He mumbled a good deal in his speech, and his voice was hoarse.

"Camarades, l'heure . . ." was all I ever succeeded in hearing, which left much to the imagination.

"Comrades, the hour . . . What? . . ." Of Destiny has struck. Or merely, for lighting up is 4.30.

Paris does not like its "concierges," and it has, of course, much reason. The opportunities of the concierge are innumerable. He, or rather she, for the man is a mere cypher in the matter, receives all the letters and

distributes them; oversees every entrance into the house and every exit; has a right to inquire of any strangers why they are there, can refuse entrance if not satisfied; has to enforce the traditional rules of the house or the particular ones made by the landlord; receives rent, parcels, messages; is expected to know all about the tenants that the landlord may deal with them if necessary, and does know a very great deal. The "loge" of the "concierge" is the centre of gossip for the whole building, say some fifteen large flats, four smaller ones, and five sixth-floor rooms; can and does often determine the length of service of one's "bonne," or whether one gets a "bonne" at all; and generally, in fact, so influences circumstances as to make life bearable or the reverse. It is not much wonder then that they are generally disliked, nor very much wonder that they make use of their opportunities for their own ends. Their pay is poor, and besides the money they have only one fairly large or two very small rooms rent free. The "étrennes" at the New Year is as much a necessity as though it were part of the rent, and frequent tips at intervals are often given. To make an enemy of one's concierge means almost certainly to move. Occasionally the concierge has had to go instead, but this needs so much combination and determination on the part of the tenants, so much hard work and unpleasantness, that except in very flagrant cases it rarely happens.

And yet concierges can be human, obliging, agreeable, honest. Madame Weisman herself had once been a concierge. And there was, at least, one down our street who was quite a dear. She was an old fat woman, not perhaps very efficient in her work of dusting staircases, etc., but amiability itself over letters and messages. She lived in her narrow, dark, ground floor room, on the right hand side of the door, a room which went back from the street to the yard with a window each end, and yet was dark, with her tame hen Pou-Poule. The hen was

supposed to live in the yard, but it never did. It was usually to be seen sleepily awake on the old lady's ample lap. She went about most of her duties with it tucked under her arm, which perhaps accounted for the sketchy dusting of the staircases, etc. . . . When she went out, rarely, of course, being a concierge, the hen was left to mind the "loge." Pou-poule had a flannel-lined basket by the side of the stove in which she sometimes condescended to rest. Occasionally she could be seen in the yard scratching on the top of the dustbin, when the old lady would scold her mildly as one might a cherished child discovered up a fruit tree. Eggs belonged, I believe, to her remote past, though she could still be heard to cackle. When the old lady sat down anywhere Pou-Poule instantly flew up on to her lap and settled down expecting to be stroked. But Pou-Poule was reserved; she made friends with no one else. All my blandishments were always thrown away, but as the old lady would say apologetically:

"Elle ne comprend pas l'anglais du tout" (She doesn't understand English at all).

The concierge of our house was much more typical. She was thin-lipped and smooth of tongue, dark and deceitful. There were all the usual rumours flying about her over the house. We confined our intercourse to "Good morning" and "Good evening," gave her the regulation ten francs étrennes, and never crossed the threshold of her "loge." As we had neither many visitors, parcels, nor messages, points of contact were reduced almost entirely to the receiving of our letters. But again Madame Weisman was of the greatest help, because she warned us at once if we were unknowingly transgressing any of the rules of the house. Also the concierge had a useful theory that we really understood no French however much we might talk it, so she always went to madame first if there was anything to be said, and madame knew exactly how to deal with her.

A concierge has her own troubles. It is difficult to please twenty or perhaps even thirty different and differently ideaed people. One tenant will come furiously to complain of another, and the concierge has to satisfy both if she can. There were times when the inhabitants of our sixth gave her a good deal of trouble.

The next door flat to ours, the one over the boulevard, was let to a little Paris "commis" and his wife. She was a fresh looking, well grown young woman with a look of the country still on her. He was little and dark, and nervous, and a real townee. They had one child, a boy, about ten months old when we first made cubbyhouse, and another baby, a girl, before we left. Of course, the small boy crawled over the floor and played, and the sound of anything on a parquet flooring penetrates rapidly below. Then as their means were small the wife used to do a good deal of washing at the landind tap, which prevented other people from getting water when they wanted it. And, meanwhile, the baby had to amuse himself either in the flat, where his mother couldn't see or hear him, or on the landing. If he was left in the flat alone, he cried. If the door was open he got out, and the parquet flooring of the landing suffered. Besides it is strictly forbidden for children to play on the stairs or landings of Paris houses. What was the poor mother to do?

The walls, I am glad to say, are very thick in Paris flats, and we heard very little of the baby, but even we would hear the sounds of his penetrating rolled "rs" on occasions. He would sit and roll "rs" by the hour together, all in his throat in the cockney Paris fashion (which interested Richard of course). On fine afternoons his mother dressed herself and the family carefully and took him, and later on his baby sister, to the "Lux." And that was all the fresh air either of the children got.

There is no doubt that France, especially Paris, needs to take the problem of its children in hand. The "Velar R baby," as we called him, was well off as Paris babies

of his class went. The little flat was light and airy, in a good quarter, and a nice house, and the "commis" and his wife clung to it in consequence through many disagreeables knowing they would not easily do so well again.

All the talk of race degeneracy and women shirking their first duties seems to me quite beside the mark so long as landlords put a ban upon tenants with children, or with several children. What is the use of even governmental bounties when the fiat of the landlord has gone forth, "No Incumbrances"? More even than the provision of flats for families is needed, though this would go a long way, when one understands the ceaseless pressure which is exercised in all directions consciously and unconsciously to reduce families to one child or to none.

On the other side of us came a room not a flat, where lived a middle-aged shop assistant from the Bon Marché. We were aware of his existence at Réveillon (Christmas Eve) when Paris sups and such-like times. Then he came home elated and late, and we were waked up in the middle of the night by overturning chairs as he struggled to bed, and in the early morning by loud snores.

The next room belonged to one of the flats, and was used as a box room.

Madame Weisman herself slept in the room at the far end of the passage, and of the two others, one was let to a foreign art student, and the other to a lady who received her "clients" in it at times.

Though it was an open secret what she was, so long as she kept the rules and didn't disturb the house, she stayed. I passed her once or twice unknowing. Thought her attractive, coarse, not pretty, apparently good-natured, and with an air of having too much steam bottled up inside her. She spoke to me once when we were drawing water together, and just as any other

"ménagère" might have done, about the difficulty of keeping rooms clean.

After a while there were complaints. She was not discreet enough in her trade. Then one day there was a noise from end to end of the landing. The little "commis" who lived next to us, standing at the top of the stairs, flushed all over his sallow face, was shouting names at her across the width of the landing; while she, in a toilette of mostly undress "deshabillé," was standing on the threshold of her room, the door wide open behind her, shouting worse things back.

Slowly the smooth head and the set smile of the thin-lipped concierge came up the staircase, stopped, listened, and went down again. The wife of the "commis" fetched him in protesting. The room door shut. Shortly afterwards there came another and a quieter tenant.

The two other flats on our sixth which looked on to the court were both let to women with working daughters. One was a very old tenant of the house, a quiet old lady whom we only saw at the rarest intervals, usually struggling up the last stairs with a full string bag of provisions in each hand.

In our quarter the great playground of the children was the Lux, especially the "English" garden, and, of course, the boulevards. One use of the boulevards does seem to be to provide a really near-by playing ground for some of the children of Paris. (Not the Grands Boulevards of course.) We always noticed, too, when any street was up for repair that the children had the happiest time. It was apparently a recognised thing that when the workmen had stopped work for the day the children were free of the road. And wooden blocks especially make the loveliest of material for building forts and castles. Many is the round latticework castle I have seen made of wooden road blocks and inhabited by very happy small persons. It says, I think, a great

deal for both sides that this could be allowed at all, and was evidence that the children could and did play without damaging, and that the workmen and employers put up with the extra trouble.

The Lux was of course the sole playground of the "better class" children, and I could not but remark the want of physical control shown by quite big-sized children and equally by quite well-off children. Apparently this kind of good habit is not insisted on early in France.

Hoops, skipping ropes, and tiny spades and pails for use on the gravelly dirt of the paths were the most usual toys, with every variety of cart and animal on wheels.

A Punch and Judy show came sometimes. There was a man who regularly made and sold "gaufrettes" (a sort of wafer pancake) at a stall; and also a small merry-go-round. Sometimes a tiny goat cart would appear for hire. But the outstanding thing in the Lux which one could not miss was the ability of the children to make much out of very little; and also too, with much apparent spoiling, their good humour and good temper. Already they seemed to possess that social sense which distinguishes France.

The Lux was the playground for others besides the children. The Jeu de Paume is a recognised sport and has its own properly made court, but on the far side of the garden near the Musée and the Palace all among the plane trees, on any fairly unobstructed oblong space, even though it ran uphill, croquet would be played by middle-aged Frenchmen with much enjoyment and a great deal of gesticulating.

The outside public stood behind a foot-high string which on four stakes bounded the croquet ground, and made comments, a great many comments. I myself have often stood among them, for I loved to see these dear, fat, old "pères de famille" brandishing their mallets, lost in enthusiasm for "le sport"; ardent,

inflamed, quarrelling sometimes, making it up always, happy, outside of themselves, as much so as the other children with their balls.

There was one fat, fat old man with a bald head who always said "Attention" before he played, and waited until it was attention from every one. Then he hit a moderate little stroke with far more enthusiasm and enjoyment than an expert extracts from even championship play. On hot days the croquet players played in their shirt sleeves. And they played, day in, day out, at about three o'clock in the afternoon as certainly as the sun shone.

Oh, that power of making so much out of so little, how it struck me everywhere in France. That power of enjoying, of getting pleasure, happiness from this and that, from anything, from nothing, of being of

". . . those who know
As the long days go
That to live is happy, and have found their heaven."

Another side of that same faculty struck me too vividly in the commercially known "article de Paris." The "article de Paris" has often no, but mostly very little, use. It isn't good art or good anything. It wouldn't last and isn't meant to. It has little "raison d'être" and no reason. It is flimsy, meretricious, useless, cheap; and yet with it all there is a something that redeems it. Daintiness, prettiness, charm, meretricious not vulgar, never vulgar, cheap but not nasty, flimsy but alluring. It pleases. It has a touch, just that touch which no other people could put into it. The touch of that genius which makes so much out of so little, and which makes so pleasing all it touches. For there too

". . . they know
As the long days go
That to live is happy."

The "blanchisseuse" who did my attenuated washing lived on the ground floor of a little house in the street nearly opposite. She worked in the small room on the left-hand side of the door, where a conical stand for heating irons occupied the centre of the room; and you spoke to her through the window. The actual washing was done by another woman of a much rougher aspect at the public "lavoir," and the "blanchisseuse" fetched, delivered, ironed, folded, and sorted the linen.

She was a dear short old lady with a faint sweet smile and wrinkled white hands. Her thin grey hair, a sort of creamy grey, was combed up on each side of a wide parting, and she had faded blue eyes and a delicate soft voice. The one girl she employed to help her iron, and who brought back the clothes at the week's end, was a pretty, dainty little person with exquisite manners. At the end of our first year she married, and was replaced by another equally pretty, and equally dainty, and equally beautifully coiffured. I fell in love with each in turn, and how dearly would I have liked to take lessons in hair dressing from either of them. The "patronne" herself spoke well of them, though I could not imagine her speaking ill of any one, she had too delicate a mind for that; and must I think have acquired so dainty and admirable a pair of employees by a simple process of natural attraction.

I often used to stop for a chat when I passed the window of their ironing room, and they were never too busy to "give me the good day" as though it were a good day and they were glad to give it.

Once I remember in talking to "la patronne" I mentioned Japan. She thought for a minute, puzzled, and then her faded blue eyes lit up with their delicate smile.

"Si, si," she cried, "je les ai vus, au Jardin des Plantes."

I did not dare inquire what sort of animals she

thought they were to see them at the Paris Zoo, for she was so simply happy at having found the answer to the puzzle.

When we left Paris, she consoled with me on leaving the sunshine which she "supposed I would not see again," and thanked me for "our good acquaintance," wishing me "bonne chance" and an "irreproachable laundress."

I often think of her. She was of those who could touch pitch and not be defiled, and from things evil could produce a soul of good.

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PART VI

THE ENDING OF THE CUBBYHOUSE

THE thesis was passed for printing.

Monsieur Henri himself had mounted the whole 108 stairs to our abode one morning to tell us so.

I had opened the door to an unexpected knock saying:
"Whoever can that be?"

And found him there, a small spectacled figure I did not recognise.

"Monsieur Richard . . .?" he said.

"Oui, monsieur."

"Monsieur Henri," he said.

I gave a gasp he must have heard.

"Oh, please come in."

He came, looking about him with something of the gleam in his spectacles that the contemplation of the Gothic pronoun "mig" had brought there.

"I am afraid you found it a very long way up," I said apologetically.

"Pour les bonnes choses il faut toujours monter, madame," he replied, giving me a little bow to mark the compliment.

I almost gasped again. But Monsieur Henri's eye had caught the shelf of books above the sofa *sommier*, and his hand was going swiftly along them.

"Bon, bon," he said, soliloquising, "no, the best edition is Sainte-Beuve's in two volumes published by Firmin-Didot in eighteen hundred and fifty and something. . . . M'y connais pas," and the rest of the row was dismissed.

My hand was on the Pentagon door when Monsieur

Henri came back to himself, quite unconscious apparently of his soliloquy.

"Veuillez entrer, monsieur," I said, trying to recollect all my best French manners. "Richard, it is Monsieur Henri who has come to see you."

Richard gasped, I know he did, but not audibly as I had done.

Monsieur Henri said, "Bonjour, monsieur," with the utmost courtesy, "Vous m'accorderez deux minutes?" as though he were asking a great favour.

I brought him *the* chair, but his eye was already on the open book on the table. He took it up.

"Oui, oui," he said to himself, "c'est ça," and put it down again.

I withdrew silently to the kitchen, sat down upon the empty stove, and shut myself in by holding on to the handle of the room door. It was the only possible place where I could retire unseen.

Monsieur Henri's two minutes were a full half hour, and I heard him as he went away shaking hands with Richard and thanking him for so kindly receiving him. Then I rushed back to the Pentagon.

"Well?" I said. "Is it . . .?"

"Yes." Richard looked provokingly calm, but his eyes were shining. "The rector has been asked to recommend it for printing," he said.

What happened next I am not quite sure. There was what I used sometimes to call "an interval for refreshments," but when we got "sensible" again we talked it all out.

When the rector is asked by the three professors concerned to recommend a thesis for printing the doctorat is safe. No one after that has ever been refused at the "soutenance." So the doctorat was certain. Then after the formal permission to print, comes the printing, the distribution of the copies, 142 to the universities of France, the Bibliothèque Nationale, etc. After that a day is

fixed for the actual "soutenance" when you must be prepared to defend it against the three judges, and on this depends the "note," the "class" of your doctorat.

So with the rector's permission to print we were within reach of our goal . . . and the beginning of the ending of the cubbyhouse. Even then in the midst of our joy I thought of it with a sudden and a bitter pang, as something which had come out of a vague "one day" into definite time, and soon might be "to-morrow." But I would not think of it. Not yet. There was still so much in front of us. So much that must be done against time too, for the two years' money was running, running out. We could not really afford to lose even a day.

Now that we had as it were the end in our hands, there came a certain breathlessness, and a fear that we should not last out the race, so that my heart sometimes would turn over within me. Yet the fear and the breathlessness but bit in the joy of the cubbyhouse, making it deathless. They were very dear, very hard, and very, very "foolish," all those last days which saw the beginning of the ending of the cubbyhouse.

Richard went through his thesis to prepare it for the printer. Then he went through the proofs as they came from the printer. And all the time he was preparing the "short guide to his life and work" which every candidate for a doctorat has to stand up and deliver; and trying to think what sort of questions and objections he would have to answer.

Other things, too, seemed coming to an end. Made-moiselle Marianne was about to be married.

As I was coming up the stairs one day, Madame Weisman called me into her kitchen to tell me the great news.

"Et le futur?" I asked much interested, "who is he? Why, you always told me you must wait a long time yet."

"Ah justement," said madame. "C'est ça. I have thought of the marriage of Marianne. I have planned it, worked for it, and now . . ."

There was a mixture of elation and disappointment in her voice that surprised me.

"And now?"

"And now I marry her to the English mister."

"The English mister," I exclaimed. "Madame!" and I sat down suddenly on the table.

The English mister was a young man supposed to be in Paris to study art, not as a means of living, he was well off, but as a means of killing time. He was a little dapper, delicate man with a family tree and family diseases. He had been a pensionnaire in the flat for the last two months, and he spoke no French.

"But . . ." I said.

Madame nodded. "Justement. There are many buts, I have thought of them all."

"Does she care for him?" I asked.

"As for that she finds him quite nice," replied madame, dismissing the subject. "It is other things which perplex me. He is not of her country or of her condition. I ask myself therefore whether that is good."

"He is well off, isn't he?" I said.

"And I ask myself whether that also is good. Will she, who has been brought up here all her life," and madame looked round her kitchen, "know how to spend so much money, reasonably, 'convenablement'? Would she not, perhaps, throw it over the windmill?" and madame looked the horror she felt at any such proceeding. "Then she must live over there part of the time. I have said first of all that she should spend three months of each year with me. But will she like it 'là-bas'?"

"Perhaps he will settle down here," I said.

"For a while just at first, yes. I do not doubt it. The painting is yet new and amusing, but it will not last. He will stay long nowhere. And then he has an aunt in

England who is to him as a mother, having none, so he will return, and will she rejoice herself with the aunt, Marianne? That is to consider."

"And to hope," I said, "since you tell me they are to be married. Though I dare say he wouldn't much mind if she didn't."

"Then he should do. An aunt is not a mother certainly, no, but she should be regarded."

Then madame washed up a number of plates thoughtfully.

"He is of poor health," she said, and washed more plates. "Also he is much in love," she said at last. "And rich as he is, I cannot but ask myself why? Après tout c'est un très bon parti."

"So you said yes, and they are to be married."

"So we said yes, I hope wisely, and they are to be married in three weeks. I invite you already to the wedding. Marianne se fait Protestante pour l'occasion."

"Marianne se fait Protestantel!"

"Mais oui. He agreed to all our demands directly without words. That was the one thing he asked on his side. On account, I believe, of the clergyman, his cousin."

"And Marianne had no objection?"

"Ah mais non. Marianne had no objection at all. And Monsieur Weisman, lui, n'aime pas les curés, et pour moi, le bon Dieu, c'est le bon Dieu, et si Jean préfère le café Louis aime le chocolat. Voilà" (for me the good God is the good God, and if John prefers coffee Louis likes chocolate).

"So Mademoiselle Marianne becomes a Protestant and is to be married in three weeks," I said. "It takes my breath away. Are they going to live here?"

"No. They go direct to Italy. It appears it is the moment for Italy. But they return here later and take a flat while monsieur continues his painting."

"And is he going to learn French, or is she to learn English?" I asked.

Madame laughed. "C'est selon," she said. "He makes some progress. Quelques mots. And she will begin to learn, no doubt, after the pastor has finished. There is no time now for too many lessons at once."

"And you?" I said. "What will you do now? There is no need to work for the 'dot' of Marianne."

"Marianne receives her 'dot' all the same," said madame quickly. "What is already there. I marry no daughter of mine without," and she looked surprised that even a foreigner should have imagined such a thing. "There should be some equality of means in every ménage," she said. "And how is that possible when one has all and the other nothing? No, no, a 'dot,' however small, is necessary for her comfort and her dignity of wife. Were he Rothschild I would say the same. Plutôt," she added reflectively. "It is wise there should not be too much difference in these things, or it makes itself felt in the home."

Here was a new light on the dot which surprised me. The claim that a dot gave a standing and an independance to the wife was understandable, but the argument that the richer the one the richer the other, so that there should be "equality," was new to me. And I wondered whether it was really this which was at the base of the whole French conception of the size of the dot governing the choice of the husband.

But madame was still speaking.

"I shall work a little while, not long, no. Just enough to feel secure. Then we will go to the country. Monsieur Weisman searches for his 'petite terre' already."

"Oh, madame," I cried, "how exciting. Monsieur Weisman will get his digging at last, and Marianne is going to be married."

"Yes, I marry her in three weeks. C'est entendu. Alors il ne faut rien regretter."

And madame put all indecision behind her once and

for all, and gave her mind to the practical details of the marrying.

These seemed extensive. A number of interviews with the respective advocates to start with; communications with the Weisman family in Bordeaux, and the family of madame herself in its Pyrenean village; the "faire part" for the wedding on white paper with fancy lettering, one from the bride's family and one from the bridegroom's, in this case the groom himself; the buying of the trousseau; the bargaining for the wedding breakfast at various restaurants in the neighbourhood; the engaging of the hairdresser for the bridal coiffure; and all the time the instruction of Mademoiselle Marianne in the Protestant faith by the Pastor of the Temple de la rue Madame.

The ceremony took place at twelve o'clock in the "temple," a bare upholstered room, square, with a booking office railing at one end before which the bride and bridegroom sat on two red velvet chairs.

"Ils sont tristes les temples," said madame afterwards. "Je préfère les églises, moi."

Marianne, rather pale, but perfectly collected, wore her white dress and bridal wreath with the properest little air of modesty and self-content. The relations from the "Midi" were not present, but various friends of the family were there and at the collation after.

"Pas mauvais du tout. Seulement il faudrait donner des glaces pour un prix comme ça" (Not bad at all, only there ought to have been ices for a price like that), said madame afterwards.

Then the bride and bridegroom left for Italy, having no medium of communication save the "quelques mots" of the English mister.

Once married Marianne took instruction in English as she had taken it previously in Protestantism, and acquired a sufficiency for intercourse of some sort, for her husband's "quelques mots" remained always

"quelques mots." They returned from Italy to the Paris flat, and when painting palled, as madame prophesied it would, spent a summer in England. But wherever they were, the three months with her parents for which madame had stipulated was punctually fulfilled.

I never saw Marianne again.

Madame kept on her flat for another year, then the "petite terre" being found at last in the environs of Paris, found and paid for, Monsieur Weisman went forth to dig it undisturbed.

As the printing neared its end we found ourselves paying "last" calls on our French acquaintances. It was one day when we were returning from a distant call, and I had been admiring the outline of Richard's nose beneath the brim of his top hat and above his white shirt and frock coat, that I suddenly spoke out.

"I don't know why," I said, "this aristocratic acquaintance of mine should only call on other people and never call on me."

Richard looked at first surprised, and then alarmed.

"Yes, I know," I added. "You would prefer to play football with your top hat, quoits with your collar, and use your frock coat as an extra blanket, but you might come just once, the first and last time. Come to tea at the cubbyhouse, and I will send a proper invitation to . . . to . . . to Mr. Scratic Nicer. You are, you know."

"From Mrs. Sweetkin?"

"Yes."

"Send it along then."

So I sent it. Addressed to

Scratic Nicer, Esqr.,
Parlour Boarder,
Dimpledom.

Written on a proper card in a proper envelope with a faked post mark and a pretending stamp, just like any other baby.

"Mrs. Sweetkin presents her compliments to Mr. Scratie Nicer and begs the pleasure of his company to tea on Thursday at 4.0 p.m.

CUBBYHOUSE,
KISSINGEN."

"R.S.V.P.

To which Mr. Nicer correctly replied (also with a faked post mark, much better done than mine, and a pretending stamp of a different colour).

"PARLOUR BOARDER CASTLE,
"TISLINGSHIRE.

"Mr. Nicer presents his compliments to Mrs. Sweetkin and accepts her kind invitation with very great pleasure."

And he came, properly knocking at the door, and being admitted by Mrs. Sweetkin also in her best clothes. And we had a most successful tea, only Richard would forget to pretend sometimes.

That was one source of perpetual argument between us. Richard would never "suppose," and I was always wanting too.

"Suppose I ran away with some one else what would you do?" or,

"Suppose we had been changed over and I had been born a man, would you have fallen in love with me?" And other fascinating suppositions. But Richard never would play. He said he "didn't know," or worse still, "What was the use of supposing?"

"The use!" When I did really want to know awfully badly. So I always had to play supposing by myself, though Richard was not above enjoying the results sometimes when I had worked them out.

Yes, the last days of the cubbyhouse were filled with delicious absurdities in the midst of all the work and in spite of all the anxieties as to that "after," and of that breathless race we were running against pounds, shillings, even pence.

It was not so easy now either to "take it out of the food," for the long strain and the work were beginning to tell, and the ordeal of the "soutenance de t  me"

was still before us, and we simply could not, of all the could nots, afford to be ill. So that our one source of income was almost at an end. And what did remain was absolutely needed and could not be altered.

Then in the middle of it all we gave a dinner-party! At least we had two guests and we gave them a dinner.

Many were my anxious thoughts over the problem of that dinner. At first I had said difficult as it was to leave undone we just couldn't do it. But really that was not possible. If the dinner had been bread and cheese it would have had to be provided; and it couldn't very well be bread and cheese for several reasons, one among them being that the guests and the dinner were for the purpose of sampling my cooking. So screwing up my courage I asked our guests to dine, and started in to plan, market, cook, and arrange the dinner.

Having settled with myself after a great deal of calculation exactly how much I could manage to skim off our food after by Spartan endurance, I proceeded to lay out this extra on the one dinner to the best advantage I could devise, always remembering the likings of my guests and the limits of my kitchen. And then the joy of creation seizing me I just went and made it the very nicest dinner of its kind that I could invent, regardless . . . though we did have to starve after.

Richard, duly instructed in his duties, opened the front door to our visitors and got their "things" safely deposited in the first room and themselves bestowed on the sofa *sommier* of the *Pentagon*. The table was already opened and spread, so there was really no other place for them. Trusting for once to the wobbly third chair, we had borrowed a fourth from Madame Weisman, otherwise some one must have sat on the floor. But for the rest cubbyhouse, though strained to the uttermost, came through triumphant. There were napkins, and glasses, and plates, and knives, and forks just enough to go round with thought and economy, and as it was to

be a French dinner we could keep knives and forks, and I very carefully had no fish.

When I knew they were settled I put everything ready in the kitchen, guarding as well as I could against anything doing too much or too little, or getting cold, or burning, or drying, or otherwise spoiling. Then when everything was ready, at the last moment I made an omelette (for omelettes to be good must be eaten directly they are made). Then I took off my apron, hung it up, and strolled into the Pentagon to welcome my guests and suggest as dinner was ready we might as well begin.

So we did with hors d'œuvres for omelette aux fines herbes, followed by a rôti of selle de mouton garnie de pommes de terre nouvelles, and an entremets of kari aux œufs à la Madras and légumes of asperges à l'huile, finishing with dessert, cœur crème, pruneaux, café.

I don't believe our guests could possibly have enjoyed the dinner as much as we did, in spite of the anxiety of a hostess and cook in one, for really it was rather like the last breakfast of the condemned criminal. I wasn't quite sure myself when we should dine again.

And it was such a nice dinner, it really was. I had been lucky enough to get the real knack of the omelette, and this one was up to my very best. The "kari" had flavoured and thickened beautifully. Monsieur Le Gros's mutton was specially tender, specially juicy, and specially deliciously scented with herbs. He had quite risen to the occasion when I explained the importance of the mutton and the dinner to him. The new potatoes hadn't spoiled by waiting, and had soaked up all the hot butter and the flavour of the chopped parsley. The salad dressing of the asparagus was to my liking, and I think to that of my guests, no real twang of vinegar, only its freshness and piquancy added to the smoothness of the oil. The "cœur crème" was good, but unfortunately too French for my guests. They hadn't advanced beyond Petit Suisse yet. The pruneaux were the weakest spot,

but there was no fresh fruit to be had that I could afford, and I could not manage sweets. Coming, however, at the very end of the eating, pruneaux were mere additions, and the coffee was good.

So we dined and enjoyed, and in that lap of our race the Pounds, Shillings, and Pence went fast ahead.

I could almost see them doing it. . . . At the very end when the guests were gone, and I contemplated the pile of washing up in the kitchen, I almost thought they would beat us after all. But then I was tired.

The remains of the feast eked out our Spartan fare for the next week, but the next and the next were rather hard. We were getting near the end of them, however, somehow, when we met young Mr. Boston in the street. We had seen nothing of them for a long time, and he gave us such a pressing invitation for a "show we are having" that we had to accept.

"Just music and sandwiches, you know," he said.

We were rather doubtful, but they were so near, and I admit honestly the "sandwiches" tempted me. We weren't exactly hungry, but . . . well, food had a fascination.

So we went, I in the "eveningy" dress, now getting old, if not worn out, and found ourselves at the swellest of evening parties imaginable.

By this time the Bostons had spread permanently into the opposite flat. And here in the largest room they had a buffet with every conceivable supper delicacy the most expensive restaurateur could turn out. Champagne flowed. An actor from the Française recited. There was a professional singer and a quartette.

Mrs. Boston was in a "confection" of the rue de la Paix, or at least very near it. She had her red gold hair beautifully coiffured, though somehow I could not feel it belonged, and her face had lost its round lines and was sharpened and aged.

Though it was nine o'clock at night the year old baby

was being carried round the rooms by the most elaborate nurse, all ribbon ends and cap frills.

There were a number of Americans and a good many French people, mostly men. And as I looked at them I wondered. Outside one's own land it is often difficult to place a stranger; but I had lived in Paris nearly two years now; I had been to Madame Martin's "teas" and her at home days; I had called on professors' wives and lunched with their friends and a vague distrust filled me.

Mrs. Boston was talking in very bad French to a whole group of these men in one corner. Mr. Boston I could not see, but could hear laughing with a more than low-necked lady in the passage.

Richard, very tall and very straight, looking his most "brunette" (brun, I suppose I ought to say, if one can say it), with his eyebrows in one straight line across his forehead, was standing against a wall, mute. It was obvious that we, anyway, were out of our element.

At the first opportunity I made my way across to him.

"I wonder if we could go," I said. "What time is it?"

"It's nearly twelve," he answered. "Can't we?"

"We aren't adding much to the gaiety of this party I know, and whether we are supposed to stay to the end I don't know, nor when the end will be."

"It looks as if some of those who stay to the end will stay after it," said Richard.

There was a pause and we could hear a lot of champagne corks popping plainly.

"The music's good," I said. "And I did enjoy the supper."

"Yes," said Richard.

Then the low-necked lady began to sing. It was a song in "argot" of which I really couldn't follow two words, but which being well sung with much expression conveyed its general meaning distinctly even to me.

"Hot stuff," said an American voice from somewhere near.

"I can't follow," said another.

"No need," returned the first, "a deaf man could see it."

Mr. Boston was applauding loudly at each verse, and Mrs. Boston still in the midst of her crowd of men was laughing.

"Shall we wait to say good-bye . . . or fade?" I asked.

"Fade," answered Richard. "They won't know."

So we faded.

As we came out on to the landing, a voice from the open door of their flat opposite, where the servants were supping, said distinctly:

"Que si. Monsieur peut la tromper avec la chanteuse, mais elle se venge."

Then I ran quickly down stairs out of the sound of it all. For the words of that other American were haunting me.

"The rest Paris sends right down to hell."

My Paris, my Paris that I loved so, with its gay courage and its power to charm, to charm and make so pleasant all it touched, duty, pleasure, sin. . . .

Yes, yes, that was it, the subtle danger that it held above all other cities, and its great far-reaching good. How pleasant had life been made to us. To us Paris had changed the iron of privation into the gleaming gold of heaven itself. But for these the very greatness of its far flung charm had been their souls' undoing. The sin of other cities maybe, more ugly, coarse, would have had no power to hold them.

". . . sure, but I should have thought," Richard was saying, "this sort of thing must interfere with his work."

"His work?"

"He said he was getting on all right when I asked, but . . ."

"He said that he . . . Why, Mrs. Boston told me

herself he hadn't been near the Sorbonne for six months or more, and she didn't suppose he ever would again."

"Well, he seems to have plenty of money. I dare say it doesn't matter . . . if he likes it."

"He came into a good deal when his mother died."

"Yes," said Richard.

"Not the best kind of glass to make spectacles with," I quoted. "Do you remember that American?"

"Yet you don't see much when you haven't any," observed Richard slowly.

"We shall do it still," I said. "And I did enjoy the *pâté de foie gras* and that *galantine*."

"And the sweets," said Richard. "When are you going to buy that franc's worth? You promised, you know."

"Oh, not now," I answered hastily, "we couldn't now. Besides, I've had them, quite that, this evening. I did truly."

"But they were promised," said Richard sadly. "And if we don't get them now you'll never have them."

I slipped my hand up under his arm. He always felt so absurdly much about those sweets.

"I know," I said, "I know. I never shall now, but I shan't break my heart for all that, shall I?"

"But I . . . I did want you to have them." And Richard mourned for the loss of my sweets and would hardly be comforted. One is like that sometimes.

It was not very long after this that the end came swiftly. Madame Weisman told me just before we left Paris.

"Les Américains sont partis," she said one day. "It's all over the quarter."

"Gone, but why gone?"

"Parce qu'ils ont tout mangé, tout, tout, tout. Il ne reste plus ça," and madame clicked her thumbnail against her front tooth with the expressive French

gesture that signifies nothing, nothing, nothing. "Pas un sou. Même les joujoux de bébé n'étaient pas payés. Nor the wages of the servants, nor the dresses of madame. Monsieur had raised money on the furniture even. And then madame had to pay through the nose to avoid a scandal. On dit de très laides histoires là-dessus."

"'On dit,'" I said, "but what is that? It doesn't make it true."

"Perhaps not. But when one lives so that it may be, one pays the penalty. En tout cas la bonne à bébé a largement profité. And the servants stole. In a ménage like that all the world thieves. They say at the station monsieur hadn't enough to pay the cabfare; and only because the driver wouldn't let them have the luggage, and a sergent de ville came to see what was the matter, madame found the francs. She had made a little 'cachette' for herself. Monsieur was furious. He tried to take the money away. There was quite a scene."

"And where have they gone now?"

"To America, they say," she answered. "But of course they would say that to discourage the tradesmen who have bills."

I thought of the two Americans as I had first known them, full of hopes and plans for life and work, and of the change I myself had seen, and the end which madame's words brought so vividly before me.

"Monsieur was furious, he tried to take it away. There was a scene." Two years. Two years in Paris and they had come to this. "Monsieur was furious. . . . There was a scene . . . on dit de très laides histoires là-dessus. . . ."

"And the rest Paris sends right down to hell."

I shuddered. It hurt me, as an injury to one I dearly loved. Not any corner of the whole large world could ever be what Paris was to me. Its streets, its houses, its people, its living life, its dead enduring past, its beauty, its character, its splendour, its homely traits of daily

life, its indestructible soul. I loved it, loved it all with a very passion of love.

And with every day the end was coming nearer, that far-off end which two years ago had seemed so remote, lost in the mists of the future, as the end of life itself, now it was almost here. Already the day for the "soutenance de thèse" had been fixed. In the "Salle des Pas Perdus" it was actually posted up. Already notice had been given to the concierge. Already even the flat was let, snapped up at once by a respectable married man who travelled in towelling.

They hadn't once looked at the view. And of course the Pentagon would be turned into a bedroom again, and that white splendour of the Sacré Cœur on its hill hidden behind muslin blinds and long thick curtains. It would grow rosy in the sunset, blue-white in the winter's dawn, palely grey when the rainclouds covered the sky, or dazzling white in the sunshine, and no one would look from the window to see.

The "commis" was a cheerful respectable man, his wife bore all the signs of a thrifty ménagère; with all my heart I hoped they would be happy in the flat. I should not have liked even the four bare walls of the cubby-house to look down on tears and sorrow, still less on wrangling and bitterness. But it would not, could not be a shrine to them. And the window and the view and the five sides of that adorable room would miss us, I knew. I had a sort of feeling it had lived through all the years of its existence since it was first made waiting to realise itself and for years it had had no chance. All the world had made it a bedroom. And then we had come and the Pentagon had blossomed forth as the aloe. It had fulfilled itself. And now the "commis" and his wife would force it into its tomb again, and the back of the best bed would be as its gravestone. I could almost see the epitaph:

Ci- Gît
 Le Corps du PENTAGON adoré
 Trépassé à l'âge de deux ans.
 Priez pour Lui.

Richard got thinner and darker as the day for the "soutenance de thèse" drew nearer, until I began to think he would disappear away like the Cheshire Cat, leaving nothing but a long, dark, straight-drawn line of eyebrows and long dark curving line of moustache. And there was, he thought, something wrong with the stove. It didn't cook quite as well as before. And he was haunted with visions of green grass over which he was always walking; and the paving stones of the street got upon his nerves. He sat with his work for long hours, and declared he hadn't done any at the end. And I began to despair. I thought we were going to be beaten on the post, for the race seemed going badly. The Pounds, Shillings, and Pence were drawing ahead, and we were out of breath.

The last week was very hard; the hardest we had known. Only Richard had to make his calls on Monsieur Henri and the other two judges and came back a little comforted. Monsieur Henri especially had been charming, and the little fillip of excitement and confidence carried him over the last few days somehow.

I don't think either of us got much sleep the night before. The "soutenance" began at eight in the morning. And we had to get up, and get there, and the fear of being late, of losing everything we had worked for at the very last minute was paralysing. Madame Weisman who was always up early had promised to tap at the door, but of course I could not trust myself peaceably to that; so I stayed awake most of the night listening to the noises of the streets fading out as the night drew on, growing again with the growing light. . . .

At six I got up and stealthily dressed. I got all the breakfast ready in the kitchen, coffee, with bread and

butter as a great treat, and only at the last moment I roused Richard. He was not asleep I think, only drowsily lying. He drank his coffee, but eating was a pure farce. And then we both went through the papers that had to be taken several times to be quite sure that nothing was left behind.

Madame Weisman, and monsieur, too, were at the door of their flat to wish us "Bonne chance" as we went down stairs. Even the concierge looked out of her "loge" and bestowed her thin-lipped smile upon us as we passed out.

The morning was fresh and beautiful as we went down the boulevard into the Bréa and the Vavin to the Luxembourg, past all the familiar sign-posts, from the bread shop at the corner of our street to the quaint little School of Apiculture behind the gate of the Luxembourg; and the exact tree where we turned off the broad gravel path that bounded the English garden on our right to get under the plane trees by the "jeu de paume," and out to the path above the sunken garden of the palace with its stone seats and its geometrical flower beds, to the gate in the Boul' Miche and the Odéon fountain; past the cafés and up by the Harcourt itself to the Sorbonne church; and to-day past the entrance which leads to the courtyard, down to the rue des Écoles and the Salle des Pas Perdus, for we had to be conducted to one of those amphitheatres sacred to theses and other special functions, though to all intents and purposes exactly the same as the ones we knew so well.

Of course we were early. The concierge was only just opening the room, and regarded us with suspicion for having caught him with his duties undone.

The three judges were to sit together on three seats in the middle of the platform. There were other seats at the sides for other professors who might happen along. Richard had to sit like a criminal at the bar on a

special raised seat on the floor of the room, facing his judges. I had the whole of the rest of the vast amphitheatre to choose from, and we imagined that I should represent by myself alone the whole public. But I didn't.

As the morning drew on, the usual Sorbonne habitués began to appear, and then I noticed some of the students whose faces I knew. And one or two professors came in, our own professors and others, so that before we were through there was quite an audience, larger than I had seen at many a lecture.

The three judges appeared punctually at the hour. Monsieur Henri beaming on both of us, the two others much more stiff and judge-like. There was a good deal of etiquette before they and Richard could all get settled in their places and Monsieur Henri could rise to open the séance.

I am sure he knew what nervous work it was, and how difficult to get a voice to speak with or words to speak at all, just at first, for he talked away to break the ice, and made everything as easy as he could by "prenant la parole" himself at the beginning, and heartening Richard visibly by his sympathy and appreciation.

Oh, but it was long! When each professor had had his say, summing up the thesis in his own manner—one of them particularly running his own hobby so hard that he really wanted it done all over again and done completely differently that it might be his hobby and not Richard's thesis—then the poor defendant had to have his turn, and justify his own and the thesis' existence, tell his own and the thesis' history, explaining why it was this and wasn't something entirely different, and why it was at all.

All this has to be very full indeed, leaving nothing out and getting everything in.

Then Monsieur Henri had another turn, summing up as it were. And when that part was all finished, and the

thesis in principle, this thesis and not another, had been justified, then the worst and longest and most important part of all began. They each in turn asked questions, made objections; all the detailed questions to the thesis as it was that each of them could think of. And Richard had to answer them all. Oh, it was long, long! But even this was over at last, and then both the other professors got up one after the other and had another say. And at long last Monsieur Henri as presiding judge summed up. He was very appreciative and said the kindest things, softening away the objections of the professor with the hobby, and with a touch here and a touch there bringing into prominence the worth of the work and the excellent treatment of the whole subject.

Then they retired to consider the verdict. And a dead silence fell over the room. Everybody waited. After a while the audience got up and began to whisper. Some of them went out. The professors were talking together. One of them came to Richard and shook hands with him, saying a few kind words.

I think by this time we were both of us almost past caring for anything except to get away, get away anywhere and rest. Richard looked so pale and so utterly weary I almost thought he would faint.

Things were even getting dim to me and beginning to turn round and round . . . when at last they all came back.

Again there was a little ceremony before everybody was settled properly and traditionally.

And again Monsieur Henri rose and made a little speech, kinder and more appreciative than ever, announcing first, what everybody knew, that the thesis was received, and secondly, what we were all waiting to hear, the "note." There are three "notes," "*reçu*," and "*reçu avec mention bien*," and "*reçu avec mention très bien*." We were told afterwards that he had wished to give the highest "note" of all, the "*avec mention très*

bien," but the professor with the hobby objecting it had been compromised to the "mention bien."

Then they all three came to the edge of the platform and shook hands with Richard, even the professor with the hobby. Monsieur Henri shook hands with me as well and told me how pleased he was.

And then, then it was all over, and we could go.

"Take me home," said Richard.

And I took him, ever so slowly, fearing I should not get him home at all, dreading I should have to have a cab. But we did do it, sitting on all the seats in our path through the Luxembourg to get courage to creep on to the next. Going, oh, so slowly up the Vavin and the Bréa, and at last round the corner to our own street, and up our own staircase.

And there on the third floor was Madame Weisman, her flat door wide open to hear us come, there she was waiting to welcome us back and give us déjeuner. A déjeuner of her very best, though no one could tell at what hour we should get it, all ready for us, all delicious.

Tired as we were even we knew it was delicious though neither of us could really taste it. But it was eaten, some of it. And then I took Richard away and made him lie down. A thing he had never done in his life before, but he was past objecting.

We had started out just after seven. We had begun at eight. The "soutenance" had lasted four hours and three quarters. It was past two before we were back again. But it was done. It was finished. Richard was "Docteur de l'Université de Paris," and in his little corner of philology he had already made a name. The race was out.

And now I come to the end. And with what words can I write of it, of cubbyhouse dismantled.

One by one the books gone from the shelves, piece by piece the furniture from the rooms, the carpets from the

floors, the curtains from the windows. What we could we packed, what we could we sold, for so little, so little, I would have liked to have taken it all with me.

And everything that went from its place was like a tooth being drawn from, yes, from my heart. How else can I express it?

I packed, but I hated to touch the things, to take them from their places. I sold the buffet, and the chairs, and the tables, the round table and the little table that we had carried all across Paris, and the two "sommiers." And as each thing went out of the flat, the tears came into my eyes, and I mourned as for a dear friend.

It was the end. The ending of the cubbyhouse, how could I help but be sad? We should be happy again elsewhere. But never again just so happy, in just that way happy again. This beautiful thing was behind us, gone, and could not come back.

But Richard went about the cubbyhouse with a large hammer, breaking it up, pulling down the shelves, and the curtain poles, knocking out the nails. He, too, had loved the cubbyhouse. He, too, was sorry, but his face was turned already to a new life. That for which cubbyhouse had existed was done and cubbyhouse must pass with it. Let the new life come then, and the new world, he was ready for it.

"And it was a little small at times," he said.

Small!

Then I sat down on the empty floor in the empty room and cried. Richard came and knelt beside me comforting me.

"It's going to be just as good again," he said, "just as good."

"I know," I answered, "I know, just as good, only never just the same. Cubbyhouse is ended,"

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